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BABBITT
WARREN

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THE BABBITT WARREN

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

ESSAYS IN COMMON-SENSE PHILOSOPHY
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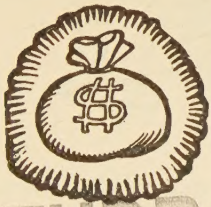
INTRODUCTION TO MODERN PHILOSOPHY
INTRODUCTION TO MODERN POLITICAL THEORY
MIND AND MATTER
SAMUEL BUTLER
THRASYMACHUS OR THE FUTURE OF MORALS
THE HIGHBROWS
PRISCILLA AND CHARYBDIS

THE BABBITT WARREN

By C. E. M. JOAD



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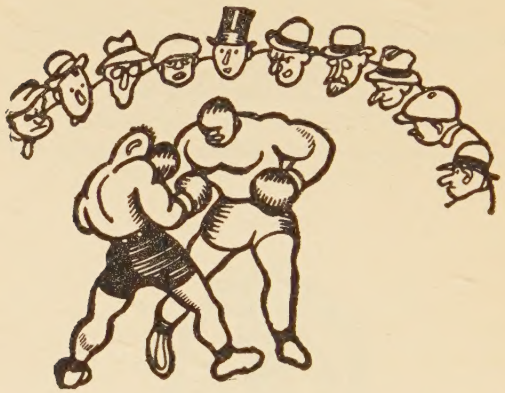

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NOTE

Si non é vero é ben trovato

The thesis maintained in the following pages is illustrated by a number of anecdotes descriptive of American life and thought. These anecdotes have in every case been taken, usually verbatim, from paragraphs in the daily Press, which presupposes in English readers an inordinate interest in American extravagances. The author has not had the privilege of visiting the United States, and has no means, therefore, of judging of the accuracy of these reports. His acquaintance with Americans and those who have been to America forces him, however, to the conclusion that the stories given in the text, even if they are not in all respects literally true, possess at least the merit of the inventions of that distinguished author, Mr. Benjamin Trovato; that is to say, if they are not true they ought to be.

INTRODUCTION

MANY philosophers have considered the object of evolution to be the universal attainment of truth, goodness and beauty. If this be so—and it seems to be a not unreasonable belief—we shall judge civilizations according to the extent to which they embody in their social institutions and exhibit in the lives of their members truth, goodness, beauty and happiness; for happiness ought perhaps to be included, in case she proves, after all, not to be lurking in some one of the other three. Judged by this standard, some civilizations are clearly progressive, others are equally clearly unprogressive. The fact that each civilization confidently asserts progress for itself, and regards its predecessors as sunk in a state of semi-barbarism, from which it has only emerged by dint of its own enlightened efforts and superhuman exertions, thereby creating the illusion of a continually and automatically operative law of progress, need not detain us. Each generation regards itself as progressive be-

cause, being both judge and jury in its own cause, its collective self-respect demands that it should think itself better than its fathers, who are no longer in a condition to dispute the opinion.

Dismissing, therefore, as irrelevant, the opinions which civilizations entertain about their own progressiveness, since all are unanimous in their own favour, we may proceed to enquire whether by the standards suggested above modern civilization is in fact progressive or not. By "modern civilization" I mean American civilization, since, as America is undoubtedly our most progressive nation, whatever is true of America will be true in some degree of all the rest. Thus, while few of the more unprepossessing aspects of civilization to which I propose to draw attention are peculiar to America, America exhibits them in the highest state of development which they have yet attained. The fact that any American novelty, from jazz to low-heeled shoes, is immediately snapped up and exploited by the nations of Western Europe, suggests that in superficial things, that is to say, in the things

that matter, it is the ambition of the other peoples to be as like America as possible. We may infer, therefore, that both the pace and the standards of western civilization are likely to be set for some time to come by the United States, and that, as regards England, the only change that seems probable in the near future is a change which will make us more and not less like the America of to-day. In other words, America leads the pack, and if we want to know whether the pack is heading for heaven or hell, we shall be well advised to examine the direction taken by the leader.

Now it is a queer but undeniable fact that, though the attainment of truth, goodness, beauty and happiness may be the ultimate object of human endeavour, they have a tendency when pursued directly, to elude the pursuer. They do not yield themselves to immediate and direct solicitation, but manifest themselves incidentally and unexpectedly, ennobling the work and gladdening the lives of men and nations who are earnestly engaged in the pursuit of something else. You cannot take the kingdom of beauty by storm; pleasure turns to

tawdry and tinsel if you try to grasp her, while "the palace of wisdom lies through the gateways of excess." A sad Nemesis descends upon those who neglect this truth. The direct pursuit of beauty ends in ostentation, of pleasure in sensuality, of goodness in hypocrisy, and of truth in "science."

It will be the main part of my purpose in the following pages to try to show that modern civilization is guilty of this neglect, and that, in consequence, it persistently mistakes ostentation, hypocrisy and scientific efficiency for beauty, goodness and truth. Two examples taken from the morning paper will suffice at this stage to illustrate a contention which it is hoped to elaborate.

Beauty.—"Portrait of B— C—, the American film star, in her costume consisting only of two hundred ostrich feathers and one thousand pearls."

Goodness.—"The frequent objection made to modern dances on the ground of their too intimate character might, in the opinion of Mr. ——, a noted American dancing expert, be met by the simplest of devices. He has

suggested that women should wear a girdle so designed as to establish between them and their cavaliers a sort of neutral zone. Mr. —— is not only serious but has given a name to his invention which will be known as the Princess Beatrice Belt. As illustrated in the American papers this morning, it consists of a flexible metal band carrying three projecting studs. He explains it may be ornamented with rosettes and ribbons, and claims that it has the strong approval of the medical men and clergy to whom he has shown it!"

I do not propose to soil this perfect thing with comment, nor would the mental attitude it suggests be important were it not that the prevalence of spurious imitations of truth, goodness and beauty tend unfortunately to preclude the attainment, except by the unrepresentative few, of what we have assumed to be the real ends of human existence.

Distorted ideals, perverted standards, and a false scale of values are the characteristics of a civilization which seeks directly and at every moment to achieve what should be the ultimate aim of every civilization. Historians usually

apply to the nations and civilizations which have erred in this respect the name of "Decadent." Imperial Rome was decadent in much the same way and for much the same reasons as modern America is decadent. What that way is and what are the reasons for it I shall try to show in the pages that follow.

I propose to divide my thesis into three parts. First, in the sphere of truth, I shall deal with the mistaken identification of efficiency and mechanical power with knowledge, secondly in that of beauty with the substitution of luxury for art and money power for culture, thirdly in that of goodness with the delusion that hypocrisy and conventions constitute morality.

Part One: Truth

TRUTH

AMERICA AND PROGRESS

"THE European of the nineteenth century," said Disraeli, "talks of progress because by the aid of a few scientific discoveries he has established a society which mistakes comfort for civilization." Noticing that the interior of an American house bears witness to the fact that we have ceased even to be comfortable, we may substitute for the comfort of the nineteenth century the efficiency of the twentieth, thus naming the chief factor in the modern belief in progress. We have enormously increased our power over Nature; sixty miles an hour in a motor car have replaced four miles an hour on foot; a machine can turn out twenty biscuit tins in the time it used to take twenty men to turn out one; and a civilized man can and does kill a hundred savages more easily than a hundred savages can kill a civilized man.

It may be doubted whether this civilized efficiency in production, distribution and destruction would strike an unbiased observer with the same weight of solid complacency as it does a modern American. It is possible, for example, that a Martian historian of the future, having studied the achievements of mankind in the twentieth century, might record them as follows: "On our nearest planet the age of the mesozoic reptiles was succeeded by that of the mammals. Of these the 'hominidæ' or larger apes, despite their physical defects, which included an inability to use their forefeet for the purpose of walking, and a bodily structure which left them so unprotected against cold that they were obliged to go permanently covered with the skins of other animals, were nevertheless enabled in virtue of their possession of a faculty akin to our own intelligence to establish a supremacy over all the other inhabitants of the planet. They chiefly used this supremacy for the purpose of preying upon other species, of which they would speedily have denuded the planet, were

their energies not continually being distracted by the destructive feuds which they maintained among themselves. The period of their dominance lasted for about ten thousand years, and was only terminated by their discovery of how to liberate the forces contained in the atom. This discovery and the additional powers with which it endowed them, enabled them to increase their mutual destructiveness to such an extent that they succeeded within a short space of time in accomplishing the complete extermination of their whole species. The destruction of this noxious race by their own unaided efforts has always been acclaimed by our theologians as one of the strongest pieces of evidence for the Providential government of the Universe."

Whatever the value of modern scientific and industrial achievement in the eyes of a Martian or of the Infinite, it is, I think, clear that in the present it produces a number of distinct though related effects which ought to be, and would be checked by a civilization which did not glory in them. These effects in-

volve a constant subordination of ends to means, and find expression in a worship of machinery and in a glorification of size, hustle and efficiency. It will be desirable to consider these effects separately.

THE WORSHIP OF MACHINERY

TRUTH, as I have suggested, is an end in itself, and knowledge of truth is probably to be regarded as one of the ultimate goals of human endeavour. Knowledge is, however, also useful as a means; through knowledge we may obtain power over Nature, and power over Nature may be used to make the life of men secure, to diminish their toil and to set them free for the pursuit of those ends which I have assumed to be valuable.

Herein lies the ultimate justification of machinery. Worthless as an end, it is valuable as a means. By enabling one man to produce in a given time as much as it formerly took a hundred men to produce in the same time,

machinery should have diminished the load of human labour a hundredfold. That the invention of machinery has not had this effect is notorious. So far from finding their toil lightened, men never worked so hard as they did in the nineteenth century. The reasons for this failure on the part of machinery to diminish human toil are mainly economic, and a study of a current work on Socialism will enlighten any reader who is curious in the matter.

There is, however, another reason not so frequently taken into account, which is nearer to my present purpose. Men, having invented machines to serve themselves, begin to serve the machines they have invented. Through worship of machinery, men forget the spiritual goods which machinery should have helped to bring within their reach.

For example, in serving this idol "machinery" they destroy beauty. Until the coming of the Industrial Revolution the North of England was as beautiful as any part of the earth's surface. The process of disembowelling the

earth of its iron and coal, of making cheap cotton shirts and thick woollen vests, of forging frying pans and erecting gasometers, has turned it into a little hell upon earth. Middlesbrough is the product of the worship of machinery, and the fact that it occurs to no one to suggest that Middlesbrough requires either explanation or apology, is the measure of our forgetfulness of spiritual ends in our worship of material means. It is, of course, true that those of us who make our money out of Middlesbrough take good care to live somewhere else, knowing that the only way we can recover from the ugliness, the squalor and the filth that our power over Nature costs us, is to escape to some spot where Nature is still exercising a modicum of power over men; in other words, we retire to the seaside or to hydros at Harrogate. But the fact that the North of England, which was once inhabited by healthy human beings, is now a world of hydros and hovels, of slums and of slag-heaps, is not of much consolation to those whose lot is cast in the hovels rather than in

the hydros, while even in the latter we are too busy repairing constitutions which have been shattered and exhausted by an age of machinery and progress, to enjoy the remnants of beauty that our industrial civilization has left us.

But what, I shall be asked, has all this to do with America? The horrors of the Industrial Revolution are *vieux jeu.* Why dilate upon them now? My answer is that in America the worship of machinery as an end in itself proceeds to lengths undreamed of by the comparatively unprogressive European.

An American thinks a mechanical device wonderful because it is a mechanical device. In America a man has six taps to his porcelain bath, a patent shower contrivance, and automatic hot and cold jets, not because it gives him any peculiar and esoteric pleasure to subject his body to the impact of simultaneous streams of water of varying temperature playing capriciously upon it from unexpected quarters, but because the inevitable complication of machinery necessitated by these childish de-

vices arouses his sense of awe and serves at the same time in some obscure way to reflect credit upon himself. How creditable of him, he unconsciously reflects, to get himself born in so ingenious and progressive an age; it is the twentieth century that has invented multiple-tap baths, and no bath has so many taps as the American.

An American will go into raptures about his bath. It is the first thing he will show you when he takes you into his house. It is largely because of their baths that Americans are always washing themselves. One of the reasons why they rate cleanliness so highly is that it gives them an opportunity of delighting in the size, the snowy glossiness and the ingenious construction of their baths.

Machinery is destructive of joy as well as of leisure. In making men's work longer it also makes it duller. It robs work of the interest of a creative and varied process, and substitutes the unending repetition of a trivial and monotonous task. Since the advent of machinery no man sees both the beginning and

the end of the things he makes: he is a mere cog in a producing-machine. What goes into the machine and what comes out of it are alike beyond his knowledge and control. I once met a girl, who had worked for two years at an insignificant process involved in the production of umbrella ferrules, who thought that she was engaged in making valves for cycle tyres. Now America is the richest country in the world; it has also more machines and more elaborate machines than any other country. In America, therefore, we should expect the benefits which machinery is supposed to confer to shine forth most clearly to the view. What are the facts? I will mention one and one only. During the last two years discussions have taken place among American industrialists as to the advisability of maintaining the twelve-hour day. The industry most notorious for its adherence to the twelve-hour day is the steel industry, in which the work involved is, perhaps, as onerous as any that men do or have ever done. It may, then, be doubted whether the lives of American steel

workers have been made happier or easier by the invention of machinery.

If men were not disposed to place more value upon machines than upon the results which machines might have been used to achieve, they would not allow machinery to destroy beauty and to banish leisure. Since, therefore, loss of beauty and leisure are the chief characteristics of modern civilization, we can only regard the invention of machinery as on balance a loss rather than as a gain. So far from agreeing to this conclusion, no American known to me can even understand how it could possibly be drawn.

AUTOMOBILISM

It is in the automobile that modern civilized man finds the most complete expression of his worship of machinery. It is for him the supreme symbol of his power over Nature, the *deus ex machina* of a progressive age. The use of the automobile also constitutes one of

the most striking examples of the modern subordination of ends to means.

As a means a motor is sometimes useful. In large towns, for instance, it will take one from door to door, and to save a quarter of an hour's walk at each end of the nearest tube or bus route. All travelling in large towns is beastly, and travelling in a motor is not more boring than travelling in a bus or in a train. It may even be less so; the motor is reasonably secluded, and in a town journey there is no chance that one may be immured in one of these vehicles beyond the limits of human endurance. As a means, then, a mere method of getting about when no pleasanter method presents itself, a motor may be useful. But it is not as a means that it is chiefly employed. The modern civilized man advocates motoring as an end, and, considered as an end, motoring is one of the most contemptible, soul-destroying and devitalizing pursuits that the ill-fortune of misguided humanity has ever imposed upon its credulity.

In the first place, the possession of a motor

perverts and distorts a man's scale of values. Even the best-intentioned motorist, the man who buys a motor merely in order to escape from the town into the country, is sooner or later overtaken by the lust of speed. At first he sets his limit at twenty-five miles an hour. What use, he asks, is a motor, unless it enables him to see the country as it passes? But presently he creeps up to thirty, and then to forty. As his speed increases, the once-loved countryside begins to look like a heaving mass of grey-green porridge; but he does not notice the transformation or, if he does, forgets to regret it. Meanwhile his wretched passenger tastes of the delights of motoring by becoming first dazed, then cold, then bored, then stupid. He cannot see the country, he cannot talk—nobody but a motorist desires to bawl in a perpetual hurricane—he cannot read, he cannot even think. His brain grows so numb from the constant hurtling of his body through the atmosphere, that it becomes incapable of concentrating on any line of thought for more than a minute at a time. Even the pleasures

of reverie and day-dream are denied to him. At the end of the journey he descends cold and irritable, with a sick headache born of rush and racks. He clamours for tea or dinner, but, lacking both bodily exercise and mental stimulus, he eats without appetite, and only continues to eat because at a motoring hotel there is nothing else to do. It is at such places that the modern fat man is made. Meanwhile his fool of a driver is rubbing his hands with ecstasy because he has overtaken a Morris-Cowley, or has "Done it in very good time, my boy. An average of thirty over four hours! Not so bad for the old bus, eh?" and avoided murdering a child by the roadside in doing so.

Motoring is praised for two different reasons. It is said that it enables the town-dweller to see the country, and that it gives an exhilarating sense of speed. Neither of these reasons is the true one. Everyone knows that the only way to see the country is to walk in it. Moreover, the motorist, even if the speed at

which he travelled enabled him to appreciate what he saw, does not see the country at all.

What he does see is a tarred road, a couple of blackened or dust-covered hedges, and a stream of other motorists. As for the country, his only concern is to see how fast he can get through it. A motorist who professes to know the country, because he has motored along its roads, is like a man who expects to find out what sort of person his friend is by studying his arteries.

As regards the exhilarating sense of speed, the average express train goes considerably faster than even the most determined motorist; to taste the delights of sheer speed, it is only necessary to thrust one's head out of the carriage window.

The secret of the fascination of motoring must, therefore, be sought elsewhere. The motor is the most perfect expression of the power of wealth, and affords the most notable opportunity for its public display. The motorist desires to advertise to the world at large that he has amassed enough money to hurl

himself over its surface as often and as fast as it pleases him. That is why, though he spends his energies in cursing pedestrians for getting in his way, he hates to drive on deserted roads. To hoot inoffensive persons out of his path gives him pleasure, by enabling him to feel and to display his power. The first article of the motorist's creed is that everyone and everything must give way to him, and the more there are to give way the better he likes it. Like everyone of vulgar tastes, he thinks that all men share them; if a man doesn't, the more fool he. Hence the motorist despises all non-motoring travellers. What wins his respect is a faster car; what rouses his sporting instinct is the desire to beat it; what gives him pleasure is the admiration of his kind. Hence the motorist courts publicity. He lives in a herd that he may the better exhibit himself. He uses his motor not to drive into the country, but to drive through the country—an indeterminate tract inhabited only by fools, artists and rustics—from one watering place to another, from a commercialized beauty-spot to a

city, or from a city to a golf course, where he builds himself a palatial hotel, adorns its lounge with his fat wife and her lap-dog brought down with the luggage, and nightly overeats and over-drinks himself as the only means of getting himself out of the bad temper into which he has cursed himself on the links.

There exists a superstition that the motorist is fat, jolly and good-tempered. Fat he is, but jolly and good-tempered he is not. Observe the bored and scowling couple lolling in this Daimler which is just about to drive you off the road into the ditch. The man is puny, and pot-bellied; the woman flabby, yellow and wrinkled. Their minds are vacant, their tempers irritable and their bodies idle and cold. They hector the chauffeur, abuse the foot passengers and snap at each other. Like others who believe that happiness can be won by mechanical means and act accordingly, they are dismally unhappy. It may, I think, be safely assumed that, if the inhabitants of all the motors hurtling over the surface of the earth at this moment were placed in a large

pen, affording an opportunity for unhindered inspection, and an equal number of persons chosen at random from the population at large were placed in another pen, the second collection of individuals would be found, in respect of youth, good looks, pleasantness, amiability, intelligence, energy, courage and fitness both of mind and body, immeasurably superior to the first. Motors, in fact, like churches and first-rate hotels, exist for the benefit of the old. Young people cannot, as a rule, afford them: they are working obscurely somewhere at the back, fitting on new tyres, mending magnetoes, oiling, swilling and generally bottle-washing for the old, upon whom they depend for employment. But then they have their compensations. Possessing youth, they have no need to rely upon machines, and they can still enjoy what is left of the beauties of the world in places where motorists cannot follow them.

I have spoken hitherto of the disease of motoring as it affects the motorists; its scarcely less distressing effects upon those who still

have the good fortune not to belong to the motoring classes have yet to be enumerated.

That the roads are no longer endurable is perhaps not so serious. No walker worth his salt ever kept to the roads, and the fact that they are now little hells of dust and noise and stink only means that, instead of welcoming a few miles of hard straight road at the end of a day on mountains or moorland, he now seeks to avoid the road at all times and seasons. There, indeed, he must consent to be the puppet and plaything of plutocracy enthroned on machinery, to have his ears assaulted by every variety of beastly sound that the ingenuity of modern civilization can devise, and his peace of mind shattered by the continual necessity under which he finds himself of performing bodily convolutions that would do credit to a professional gymnast.

Tormented by the belchings, hootings, whinings, snappings, yawlings and eructatings of the latest Angel's Voice or screeching Klaxon imported from America, how often have I re-

joiced to imagine some automatic reactor that would visit an appropriate retribution upon its owner; a bladder, for instance, fixed to the car, that would beat him hard upon the face, blow for blast; or a mud-throwing machine that would project clods into his eyes! How have I revelled in such thoughts, picturing each clod juicier and stickier than the last, as with each succeeding mile the hootings have grown more flatulent and peremptory!

All this is bad enough, but not so bad as to arrive at a journey's end and find that one's inn has been captured by motorists. The old country inn, if indeed it ever existed, was chiefly loved because of its difference from the entertainment of the town. "No anger, no sorrow, no fret, such a large fireplace, everything different from London and altogether better," said Edward Thomas. It has largely disappeared, to be replaced by the civilized hotel. A civilized hotel is a little urban globule floating like scum on a rustic pool. The porter's eye gleams significantly and unmistakably as you enter; the warmth

of your welcome is conditioned by your estimated tipping capacity, and every civility has its price. The motorists are in the lounge or at the bar, drinking cocktails. . . .

It has long been known that you cannot loose the products of a progressive age into the country without polluting it. The pollution of the countryside is believed to be confined to the lower classes, and is usually ascribed to lack of education. This belief, however, is a delusion. "Well-to-do people who come here in motor cars and have a butler and maids waiting on them, are just as bad as poor people. Quite recently a champagne bottle and an empty sardine tin were found in a beautiful and secluded part of Holmwood." [1] One meets these "well-to-do people" lunching on a common or by the roadside, surrounded by bags and bottles, spawning scraps and litter, trying to impose an artificial primitiveness on a primitive artificiality. They ask you the way, and you misdirect them, or you

[1] Extract from *Daily News* interview with Chairman of Conservators of Keston Common.

are happy in being able to offer them no assistance in the matter of a burst tyre.

How out of place they look! So different from their surroundings! but not for long! For soon the place will be "developed" and bristling with advertisements for Petrol, studded with A. A. Boards, equipped with refreshment booths and littered with peel and paper, it will become a suitable setting for its inhabitants!

Vulgar people degrade whatever they touch. They made horrible towns and we left them. Now the motors have taken them into the country, and they make that horrible, too. Soon nothing will be left undefiled. For from the motorist nothing is safe; the moorlands shudder, the rivers falter, and Great Gable, shortly to be crowned with an American ice cream and soda bar, hides its head in shame and mist.

Now in America there are more motors than there are anywhere else. The middle classes complain that even the sweep and the window cleaner drive their cars. The number of cars

in America is variously estimated from one to every six to one to every eight of the inhabitants. Take, for example, the following extract from the daily paper:

"CAR TO EVERY SEVEN.

"America's Amazing Motoring Development.

"The amazing development of motoring in America is referred to as follows in a letter from a correspondent at Pasadena, California:

" 'The motor-car situation in California is astonishing. There are over one million cars in this State of about four million people. There are too many of them. If you cross a street you have to run for your life. The streets in some places are jammed up with them.'

"Speaking of the increase of cars in the United States generally, the writer says: 'The increase since 1889 has been marvel-

lous. In that year there was one car for every 18,000 people; to-day there is one for every seven people. There are over fifteen million cars and trucks, and these consume over six million gallons of petrol per annum. The number of motor vehicles registered in 1923 was, in fact, 15,287,295, which was a *gain*[1] of 2,916,918 over the figures of the preceding year. It is estimated that motor-car transport costs annually over seven billion dollars, but that for every dollar so expended we add several dollars to our national income.' "

Even Americans, it seems, are beginning to find motors a nuisance.

WAR MACHINES

THE modern belief in armaments is like the modern belief in motors in that it involves a subordination of ends to means. The avowed object of armaments is to prevent war; the

[1] My Italics.

only possible effect of them is to promote it. Thus the Great War was born of Europe's conviction that the only way to insure against war was to devote all her savings to the storing up of explosives. Believe sufficiently in the efficacy of your means, and the means will themselves become an end, thereby defeating the end they were designed to serve.

Similarly the modern civilized nation insists on a bounding birth rate. Why? Because an increasing population is considered to be at once a proof of vigor and a safeguard against attack. But the pressure of expanding populations, with the consequent rush to annex and to exploit undeveloped territories, is notoriously one of the underlying causes of war. The civilized militarist recognizes this when he tells you that Germany's teeming millions and their necessity for finding an outlet made the Great War inevitable. Thereupon you recommend birth control as a means of mitigating the struggle for existence, only to be met with the answer that considerations of national

safety demand an increasing population, reinforced with head shakings over the French.[1]

Thus more children are recommended as a safeguard against the very evil which more children are admitted to produce. Guns and babies, cannons and fodder, with America as usual in the van! It is estimated that if the population of America goes on increasing at its present rate, it will have doubled in eighty years! American business men recognize, moreover, the advantages of an unfailing supply of competing workers for industrial purposes. They form the raw material of industry in time of peace, just as they form the raw material for cannons in time of war. Many workers mean large profits; it is said that foxes approve of large families among rabbits.

This praise of peace and this preparation for war, this concern for national well-being

[1] See Dr. Vaughan Cornish in a paper read to the British Association meeting at Liverpool, September, 1923: "In order to have strategic security in this island, we must be able to meet the air force of a European combination, as well as to carry out our traditional plan of dispatching a powerful expeditionary force for the support of a friendly power. This *active defence* requires a large population." (My italics.)

and this advocacy of teeming populations, look like conscious hypocrisy. They are nothing of the sort, at any rate in America. They are evidences merely of stupidity. We deceive ourselves about our motives, not deliberately, but unconsciously. We really do not know what we like and want and think. Thus we really believe that it gives us no pleasure to read from a crisp morning paper of shootings and burnings and rapings, of tortured women and of men lying disembowelled in water-logged trenches, while our shoes warm before the fire, and the mingled smell of coffee, eggs and bacon assails our nostrils. We really think that we dislike war and have taken the best means to avoid it. Not only so, but we believe that the great difference between the savage and the civilized man lies in the fact that we hate war and wage it only for pure and for just ends, while the savage revels in it and wages it gladly for selfish ends. There is indeed a great difference, but it is not the difference we imagine. The real difference is to be sought in the fact that the civilized man

possesses a reason, by means of which he is enabled to disguise his real motives from himself. The chief use of reason in all ages has been to invent justifications for what we instinctively wish to do, and arguments for what we instinctively wish to believe. Hence, so far as war is concerned, the difference between the civilized man and the savage is that the former is able to use his reason to justify the indulgence of instincts in which the latter glories without hypocrisy.

Americans, who are civilized, have brought their reasons to a high pitch of efficiency in this respect. A recent American seven-reel film presented the reincarnation of a single personality in Seven Ages. The first reel showed the stone age, the second the iron age, and the seventh what was termed "The Age of Civilization." This reel represented the exploits of the hero in the Spanish-American war for the Philippine Islands!

Meanwhile our scientists are hard at work enlarging the scope and range of lethal weapons. We measure the progress of civili-

zation by increased efficiency in killing, taking care at the same time to persuade ourselves that each new invention is only encouraged and adopted because by making war intolerable it will make it impossible. This persuasion is a delusion. So long as we produce the means of war, we shall worship them as means, even though we call them the means to prevent war. And so long as we worship them we shall itch to use them.

One way out of the difficulty lies in the education of scientists. Scientists, being at present uneducated men, are mere reflections in every thing but their scientific skill of the civilization to which they belong. Like the doctors, they adopt the conventional standards and ready-made morality of the herd, because they are too busy to invent standards and evolve a morality for themselves. Thinking all the time, they never have time to stop to think. Even if they had, it is doubtful whether they would think to any purpose. The man who invents is not the man who has the intelligence to see that his invention is rightly used. Yet

unless scientists can be found who will resolutely refuse to prostitute their talents to the invention of progressively more effective weapons of destruction, we may confidently expect the human race to perish by its own innate destructiveness. We survive only for so long as we are unable to devise adequate means for our extermination.

The trouble with the civilized scientist is, in fact, the same as the trouble with the civilized man. Man's inventive power and mechanical ingenuity have enormously outstripped his social wisdom and intelligence. A human being perfecting the engine of a motor car is behaving like a super-man; the same human being driving the motor at fifty miles an hour to the discomfort both of himself and his fellows is behaving like a born idiot. It is doubtful, indeed, whether our social wisdom is less than it was; but our mechanical power is very much greater, and unless the one grows with the other we shall certainly destroy ourselves. Put an air-gun into the hand of a child, and it is comparatively innocuous; substitute a

modern Lee-Metford, and he becomes a public danger.

I conclude, therefore, that unless we can control the results of the application of science to life, we had better stop applying it.

In this conclusion I find myself out of touch with the most progressive forces in modern civilization. Science just now is all the vogue. It is patted on the back, handsomely endowed, and bidden to provide a ready-made key to unlock the secret doors of the universe. This task, however, is beyond its power, since science is not concerned with truth in itself, that is to say, with truth about the universe. Unlike religion, it does not swallow the universe whole: it chops it up and chews it piecemeal. As a result, it takes of necessity a mechanical view of things, for the universe, taken piecemeal, looks like the parts of a machine. For the *deus ex machina* of religion science has substituted a *machina ex deo,* while all America raises a pæan over the triumphs of modern progress.

What America means by "progress," then,

is not increased knowledge, but the successful application of science to practical problems. Hence, when in America science is taught and endowed, it is taught and endowed solely for its potential use to the business man and the statesman. Knowledge for its own sake is a luxury which a progressive nation cannot afford; but knowledge as a means to increased profits, the speeding up of output, or the discomfiture of enemies, is recognized as a social asset and paid for accordingly. There are five times as many scientific laboratories in the United States as there are in any other country. Wherefore let us drink to the toast, "Here's to Pure Mathematics and Pure Philosophy, and may they never be of any damned use to anybody!"

THE BELIEF IN SIZE, HUSTLE AND EFFICIENCY

The Belief in Size

"Ten square miles are not ten times as wonderful as one square mile, and a thousand

square miles are not practically the same as heaven."[1] An appraisement of the value of things in terms of their size is not an infallible guide to their worth. Cancers, corns, wars, quarrels, lunatics and spiders are all better small than large. If, however, we are to follow the American fashion and accept size as a criterion, we cannot help feeling that, while small things may be better or worse than big things, small nations are almost invariably better off than big ones. The citizens of Norway and Sweden are more highly educated than those of England or America; the Danes have little or no unemployment, and the Swiss, who know no class-distinctions, prosper and are happy. But all things must make a merit of their defects, even large things. Hence the modern civilized world, which glorifies large-scale production and despises the craftsmen of the Middle Ages, prides itself on the size of its Nation State in order to think small beer of the Greek City State, while the American citizen, in the van as usual, congratulates him-

[1] E. M. Forster, *Howard's End.*

self on being a member of the largest democracy in the world.

This self-congratulation is not, to say the least of it, well timed. A large democracy is by its very nature an incomplete democracy, and the largest democracy in the world is no democracy at all. The reason for this is not far to seek. In order that there may be direct expression and direct representation of the popular will, it is necessary that there should be an alert and vigorous will to express. Where there is political apathy there can be no democracy. Now every normal individual possesses what we may call a political impulse. It prompts him to speak in public, serve on committees, read newspaper leaders, election literature and blue books, give coppers to the deserving poor, take a general interest in the welfare of others, and meddle in public affairs with a view to promoting what he believes to be the welfare of the country. All public-spirited men are essentially busybodies. They are moved by an impulse to make themselves felt; they wish to interefere and, if possible, to

control. All this is as it should be. The practice of non-interference and *laissez faire* may be all very well in the millennium, but meantime somebody has got to see that the drains are kept in order, that madmen do not run amok, and that we all put our clocks forward at the same time.

Since public action has to be taken, it is better that it should spring from the political impulse of the average man than from the pigeon-hole of the bureaucrat. But in a community of American dimensions this impulse is continually thwarted. So vast are the forces at work, so complex and elaborate the structure of Government, and so intricate and difficult to disentangle the strands that condition events, that, so far from controlling them, men seem unable even to understand them. In face of the complex organization of the large modern State the individual feels impotent. Events which occur seem to be not so much the result of human will and effort as of the interplay of blind and uncontrollable forces, whose genesis escapes detection and whose object, if any, is

shrouded in mystery. A coal strike in South Wales may mean semi-starvation for old maids at Southsea, and the monopoly exercised by Hollywood in the world of films, by causing the habits and morals of cowboys to spread among the impressionable population of the London slums, has produced an increase in juvenile offences. All this points to the practical impossibility of determining to what extent any one thing in the modern world may or may not affect any other thing.

In such circumstances men are driven increasingly to that interpretation of phenomena with which Mr. Hardy's novels, and still more his poems, have made us familiar, to the notion of some blind unthinking Force or Fate, which determines the march of events, yet determines them without design, which furthers human efforts without purpose and thwarts them without malignity, a Force before whose power man's endeavour is powerless or, if it succeeds, is successful by chance and not from merit. And this conception is thrust consciously or unconsciously upon men who

neither accept the doctrines of determinism nor indulge in spiritual flirtations with fatalism, by the spectacle of a social mechanism so vast that the individual seems powerless to mould its ends or to modify its workings.

The effect upon politics is far-reaching. In the later Roman Empire, where similar conditions obtained, men lost interest in public affairs; the one wish of the governing classes was to have done with the wearisome business of administration as soon as possible, in order that they might retire into the society of their friends and edit the poets. It is the same in modern America, except that one does not edit the poets.

In order that the common man may feel that interest in affairs which can alone make democracy a reality, it is necessary that he should be able to feel that he counts, and that his will can be made to matter. The larger the society to which he belongs, the more difficult it is for him to experience this feeling. Even in a country of the size of Switzerland it is easier to influence the policy of one's foot-

ball club than the politics of one's State. But in a country as large as America the effects of size are seen in political apathy, and a lack of reality in public life. This result, which follows directly upon the overgrowth of the body politic, involves a failure in democracy. Politicians are elected on unreal issues, the populace is swayed by catchwords,[1] and the better men keep away altogether.

The effects of size in industry are no less disastrous. The benefits which large-scale production might have been expected to achieve, have an odd trick of frustrating themselves. Although less work is now required to turn out a given amount of goods, people work harder than they did before the industrial revolution because they wish to turn out more goods. One reason for this is that under modern methods the production of an immense quantity of goods is more profitable than the production of a moderate quantity; but it is also true that men have to produce more goods because there are more men to consume them.

[1] See page 132 for "Keep Coolidge."

Let me put the matter symbolically. In 1750 we will assume that a man took a day to make a shirt, and made it to fit the man who was to wear it. In 1850 a man took the twentieth part of a day to make a fifth part of a shirt, and four other men took each a twentieth to make each a fifth. Thus the same shirt is now made in a quarter of the day, or four [1] shirts are made in one day. But is this, after all the gain that it seems? In the first place it appears that there are now four times as many people to wear the shirts. For this reason it is probable that, despite the greater rapidity and abundance with which goods are now produced, the mass of mankind are no better off than they were before goods were produced so rapidly. Men bred recklessly during the industrial revolution, partly to produce a sufficient number of small-wage slaves to make both ends meet, partly because life offered them no better amusement. In the second place, although the shirts are potentially there, those who make

[1] Of course, the correct total is really much larger, but when discussing size we are anxious not to be accused of exaggeration, and so reason on the basis of a certain underestimate.

them lack the money to buy them in sufficient quantity to benefit by the increase. Hence, while X has ten shirts, Y now has fewer than he ever had; yet Y is twenty times as numerous as X.

Medical science has made enormous strides. There is, indeed, no end to its marvels. We can take a piece of one man's body and transfer it to the body of another, where it functions as well as it did in its native environment. Thus, a rich man who had lost his eye recently purchased another from a poor man, the transfer of optics being hailed as a marvel of medical science and operating to the advantage of all concerned. Modern progress has thus opened up to the rich unprecedented ways of living *on* the poor, and has given a new meaning to the term "parasite." In general, it is now possible to patch up bodies so old or damaged that, in a less enlightened age, they would have fallen to bits altogether, with the result that we keep alive many persons whom previous civilizations had the sense to allow to die.

But while medical science has learnt to patch

up bodies hitherto deemed beyond recall, chemical science has achieved an unprecedented efficiency in blowing them to bits again. Thus we have in modern warfare the extraordinary spectacle of the resources of civilization being employed to furbish up damaged human bodies, in order that the resources of civilization may knock them to bits again. Since the doctor, however clever, can only patch up one man at a time, while the chemist can operate with equal efficiency against several thousand at once, it will be seen that civilization is on the whole the loser by the twin advances in surgery and chemistry.

Science has learned to control birth, and eugenics have at last entered the field of practical politics, with the result that we have a markedly selective birth-rate, discriminating against the educated and healthy and propagating the stock of the feeble and the unfit. Society is thus continually proliferating at the bottom and thinning away at the top, a process which will ultimately express itself in a general deterioration in the level of the population.

The increase in the means of rapid transit illustrates a similar frustration of potential benefits. Before the age of progress the man with a taste for the country who worked in the city lived two miles from his place of business and walked the distance in half an hour. He enjoyed the country, did his work, and got his exercise. Then came the trains and, what is more to our purpose, the tubes. The two miles could now be traversed in five minutes, and it seemed at first that a great gain had been achieved. A man could now, it appeared, live a full dozen miles out of town, thus exchanging what was after all a semi-suburban residence for the country proper, and take no longer to reach his place of business than he did before; or, if he chose, he could stay where he was and get to his office in under ten minutes.

But unfortunately the same process which had made it possible to go farther afield had made it necessary. The mere fact that the interior of London has become readily accessible from any point within a radius of a dozen

miles, has stimulated the growth of London to the extreme limits of the radius. It is true that the country lover can live farther from the centre of the town, but, he must go farther to find the country. Thus the benefits which the tube might have conferred are cancelled by the new necessity which they have imposed. The man who is prepared to spend half an hour in reaching his work now lives, not in the country, but in a suburb lacking the advantages both of town and country, and spends his half-hour not in healthy exercise but in hurtling through the bowels of the earth in a little hell of ugliness and stuffiness and racket and overcrowding. Most middle-class men now live in this way, with the result that both city and suburb lack that sense of personality which is created by a stable and indigenous population. The one is a workshop, the other a dormitory: neither is a community. And if, appalled at the prospect of spending two hours in every twenty-four in mere movement, the city worker chooses to live near his work, he must face the prospect of a stretch of twelve miles of bricks

and mortar intervening between himself and the nearest field, and pay in nervous wear and tear for the lack of country sensations, occasional silence and occasional solitude, which are as necessary to mental and bodily health as food and sleep.

It is not too much to say that the strain of modern life, together with the irritability and neurasthenia which it breeds, are due in a large part to the mere size of the cities on which we are so ready to pride ourselves.

SIZE IN CITIES

I HAVE tried to show that, on the material side, the worship of size tends to rob each fresh advance in human power and knowledge of the advantages which it might have conferred. But, although these are the more obvious, the evils which it breeds are not confined to material things. More important is the deadening effect of size upon the spirit, and more particularly upon the spirit as it finds expression in human association and human intimacy. Tak-

ing again the case of the great modern city, let us see what are the conditions of human association which mere size prescribes. I shall use London as my example because I happen to know it best; I use it, however, in the assurance that what is true of London is true in a greater or less degree of each of those large modern cities, which increased facilities for transit and travel have bred like vast wens upon the fair surface of the earth.

When I speak of the evil effects of size in London I do not mean the more obvious and direct effects; the superficial discomforts and inconveniences of the place, the overcrowded buses, the struggle for food in the restaurants, the jostling and rudeness in the streets, the strain upon the nerves of the continual sight of unknown faces, the hatred of one's fellows lined opposite in tube or train, (how many of us, I wonder, can have studied that row of vapid, unseeing faces, women's faces for the most part, since the men's are decently hidden behind their papers, without having longed once at least to rise and startle the stolid air with

some unforgivable obscenity)—these, the toothaches and pimples of our spiritual experiences, immensely exacerbated as they have been of recent years, I pass by. They are acknowledged, they are duly regretted, and nobody attempts to defend them.

I am speaking rather of the spiritual colour of life in London, and of the inevitable lack of all those qualities which make for dignity and beauty in life and for the stability of personal relationships.

Now London is too big, not only in the number of square miles that it covers, but in the number of eligible people it offers for our acquaintanceship. It is, in fact, so full of interesting and amusing people that we cease to place value upon any of them. If we lose them it is easy to replace them, and relationships which can be changed as we change a suit of clothes are divested by this very facility both of significance and uniqueness. Brains are cheap in London; we are surrounded by the moderately witty, and the number of our acquaintances is limited only by our opportuni-

ties of keeping up with them. Thus London puts a premium on acquaintanceship and a penalty on friendship. Friendship demands that people should meet often and meet unexpectedly; they should come upon each other at odd times. But in London the very distances at which people live from one another, and the unparalleled brutality of the tube journey that separates them, make this chance visiting impossible. In a University town a man obeys an impulse and drops in on his friend in the next street on the chance of his being in. But who dares travel from Chelsea to Hampstead on the spur of a friendly impulse? You cannot make chance visits in London, for you dare not risk your friend's being out. Thus is intercourse robbed of that element of surprise which is the prime requisite of romance. It has, in consequence, to rely on "engagements." It becomes a matter of dates. Little pocket books are kept in which engagements are jotted down, and friendship is constrained by rules and the calendar and organized with a view to fitting the greatest number of people

into the smallest period of time. Organization robs it of spontaneity and it becomes mechanical.

If you have walked with a man for an afternoon in the country and liked him, it is necessary for the growth of intimacy that you see him at dinner the same night, with a reasonable prospect of meeting him at the breakfast table the next morning. In the country it would be so. But London rends you asunder at your respective suburban stations, because, forsooth, one of you has an engagement that night. "When can we meet again?" you ask, and out come the little pocket-books, that the friendship may be duly catalogued and pigeonholed for resumption at a convenient date. "On Tuesday," says one, "there is a dinner party I simply must go to; on Wednesday there is a concert it would never do to miss; Thursday is free, but on Friday I am speaking at a meeting." On Thursday the other is engaged, and the first free night for both is nearly a fortnight ahead. By that time the first flush of liking has had time to cool and

fade, the romance has died out of the relationship, and the new friendship has become stereotyped according to the accepted mode that London imposes. So in truncated gobbets of time do we lease ourselves out to our friends, and mutilated intercourse drags its weary round. Our friends lose significance, our likings spontaneity. It is only when we meet our London acquaintances in the country that we find how pleasant they are, and realize how we might have liked them in town, had opportunity been kinder.

And who does not know the reverse process? The reunion in London of those who have met and been attracted in the country. The occasion is eagerly looked forward to, but somehow falls flat. You have met, perhaps, at a restaurant, dined together, and afterwards gone to a show. At dinner you have indulged in reminiscences of the time that is past, that is to say you have lived on the capital of your acquaintanceship and have laid out no new investments. Intimacy is impossible in a London restaurant: the talk remains on the surface,

and you are surprised at the end of the evening that it has been so. "How dull X seems in town!" you say.

Or perhaps your friends are invited to dinner at your house. They meet your set or your relations, but somehow fail to mix. Reminiscences won't do, for they disfranchise those who were not present at the scenes discussed. Commonplaces, or, if the intelligences concerned are a little higher, generalized and possibly witty conversation follows, but this sort of thing has lost the zest it possessed in the country. In a fortnight's time the visit is returned, with the same result. No new bonds of intimacy are formed, and the old ones will hold no longer. The acquaintances who met in the country and might have been friends, drift apart. To whip themselves into maintaining an artificial intimacy in London is too great a strain; their orbits do not cross in daily life, and they have no time to be constantly seeking out and inviting. Hence they determine to meet no more. It is London that

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has robbed their acquaintanceship of its significance and killed it.

LONDON DISEASE

Thus intercourse in London reduces itself to meetings at stated intervals, when a dinner party or a little informal music is the occasion of forgathering. As the chances of accidental meetings in London are too remote to be counted on, invitations must be issued. This introducing an element of formality, and, since you cannot expect people to come half across London to see you without feeding them, a meal must be provided. Expense is involved, and the parties who might have been just friends are thrust at once into the relationship of host and guest, with obligations on the latter to return hospitality.

In such circumstances the talk may be witty or brilliant, but it is not good or easy talk. Good talk demands continuity of intercourse. It requires that the participants shall be sufficiently acquainted with the insides of one an-

other's heads, to be able to make short cuts with some assurance of comprehension. But London, which lets people see one another so rarely, reduces conversation to a kind of display in which "remarks" are flashed out as if they were fireworks. People are not sufficiently significant to make it worth the trouble to be serious with them. You cannot bare your soul to those you see but once a fortnight, and the depths of the human spirit boil over into a sort of surface froth of epigrams and *bons mots*. There is brilliance, but it is the brilliance of a well-soaped bald head. It reveals nothing beneath.

And so the profounder problems are left untouched. For talk about literature there is substituted chatter about literary personalities. What might in the country have been an analysis of the causes of labour unrest or the structure of society, subsides into gossip about the personalities of labour leaders, or the sartorial peculiarities of Cabinet Ministers.

The men who talk in the evening in London are men with tired minds. Throughout the

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day they have whipped themselves into a feverish activity; many have been engaged in creative work; all bring to the relaxation of after-dinner intercourse the fag-ends of jaded brains. In London men are perpetually tired. The fortress of the mind is continually battered by assaults that would take its interests by storm. London stimulates, but leaves the mind no space to concentrate on the stimuli it has received. Hence the feeling to which all Londoners are accustomed, the feeling that one must go away into the country to think. One must be let alone, given time to turn round, and, like a dog who has captured a bone, take it into a corner and meditate before consumption. And because London provides no breathing space in its innumerable calls upon the interest, the mind grows blunted, the freshness of perception is dulled, and the tired brain fails to respond. So friends, music and literature lose their significance, and enjoyment becomes a weary round of duties.

This, then, I would define as London disease: to confine the spontaneity of human

intercourse within the framework of the Underground Railways, and to regulate relationships by the exigencies of pocket diaries. For what zest can there be in conversation, with the thought of a journey to remote suburbs looming like an impending fate over the heads of the tired talkers? What dignity in a life which consists of stepping from pavement to bus, and from bus to lift, and in which one visits one's friends by burrowing like a mole in the bowels of the earth? What care for the Absolute, when the Absolute itself must give way to the urgency of the last train from Waterloo?

But this book is not an indictment of London, and I must hasten to pick up my connections. As I said above, I write of London only because I know it, and I write of modern London in this place, because, big as it is, all that I have read, heard and seen shows that it is to America that we must turn for the most complete expression of the worship of size. In England the city without a soul is the exception, in America it has come to be the

rule. Of nothing is America prouder than the size of her cities, unless it be of the uniformity of her citizens. The American reads with pleasure those statistics already referred to, which show that, if the population goes on increasing at its present rate, it will have doubled in eighty years; he loves to hear that the average height of his sky-scrapers and the average length of his railway lines is at least a third greater than it is anywhere else. He is proud of the extravagant abundance of his Press. The *Miami Herald,* we are told, prints a daily newspaper containing 340 pages, and we cannot believe that other cities allow themselves to be outdone; nor can we help wondering how many noble trees must have been hewn down to produce the material for this spate of news and advertisement. Oblivious of the fact that only small countries are happy, the American can scarcely hide his contempt for the citizens of Holland or Denmark, and, forgetting that the fortunate countries are those that have no history, he bears a constant grudge against his own for its brevity.

Not the least of the evils which beset the large community is that which blinds it to the existence of evils. The two chief political evils from which American people suffer are political apathy and lack of individuality. Both these evils are due to the enormous size of the national unit, yet of both Americans are in a large measure unaware. Of the evil of political apathy I have already spoken; to the evil created by the suppression of individuality in order to achieve an artificial uniformity I shall return in the second part of this book.

THE BELIEF IN HUSTLE AND EFFICIENCY

The belief in hustle rests upon a perversion of values similar to that which underlies the belief in size. It cannot be emphasized too often that the purpose of machinery is to make men's toil lighter and their lives easier. In the fulfilment of this purpose lies its sole justification. How does it, in fact, fulfil it?

I have already pointed out that considerably less work is now required to produce a given

amount of goods than was necessary before the industrial revolution. It might have been expected that men would receive some resultant benefit from this growth of power, some diminution in toil, some increase in leisure and spaciousness of life. Yet people live at higher pressure than they did. The whole urgency of the modern business world is towards speeding up, greater efficiency, and more intense international competition, when it ought to be towards more ease, less hurry, and combination to produce goods for use rather than for profit.

As a result hustle, which is a means to greater leisure, comes to be regarded as an end in itself. I have an uncle who in his early and middle years was passionately devoted to eighteenth-century literature. It was his object to organize a busy life to the highest pitch of efficiency, in order that his economies in time might give him as much leisure as possible for his beloved Fieldings and Smolletts. His work, which carried him over a number of counties, involved the catching of many trains, and my uncle, accordingly, made it a point of

honour with himself never to miss a train; to do so might involve the disorganization of his whole day, and so diminish his leisure for reading. In course of time the importance of catching trains came imperceptibly to transcend the importance of that for which he caught them, until to-day my uncle is never less than three-quarters of an hour before the scheduled time of departure in his arrival at the station. The effect upon his reading of these many hours subtracted from literature and added to train catching can be imagined. Even my uncle cannot absorb Sterne on a railway platform. This avuncular allegory which may be applied to the civilized world at large, applies as usual with greatest force to the most civilized part of it. Men in general, and Americans in particular, desire speed and hustle, effort and endeavour, not for what they achieve, but for their own sake, because they have lost sight of the end in the means.

Not the least interesting symptoms of this state of mind is an instinctive distrust of leisure and admiration for effort. In whatever

way leisure may be used, it is despised as idling. However futile the objects to which effort is directed, they arouse admiration because effort is exercised. This is particularly true of America, where the subordination of ends to means is most marked. Americans admire feats of endurance which are purely silly, simply because they involve endurance. Theirs is the land of hundred per cent. "activating he-men," and hundred per cent. enduring she-women. We indulge in non-stop dancing, though even at that America beats us every time, but it was and could have been only in America that a non-stop washing-up competition was organized, and that a woman secured a prize for a feat of thirty-one hours non-stop washing-up. It is from America too that there comes the report of the following feat:

Extract from daily paper, September 27th, 1923:—

"At Janesboro', in Georgia, D—— H— won a 'tobacco chewing Marathon'

against 45 other competitors, says the Central News. He chewed without ceasing for two days and a half, when the doctors stopped him to prevent lock-jaw."

Citizens of London may remember that the walls of its underground stations were recently posted with notices showing the comparative speed of tube trains, vehicles and foot passengers in London and New York respectively. We were complacently asked to note that, contrary to expectation, London had the advantage of New York in every respect; the citizens in her streets walked faster, her tube trains moved on an average at a higher speed, even her taxis beat the comparatively dilatory New Yorkers by a short head.[1] These figures came close on the heels of another set of statistics, showing the increase in street accidents in London during the year 1923. The fact that these statistics included a twenty-three per cent. increase on the figures for the previous year, and amounted in all to the colossal

[1] It is of course, needless to remark that this hard-won advantage over the American is of the most transitory description.

total of 69,813, in no way diminished the Londoner's gratification at the thought that both above and below the earth's surface he moved faster than the New Yorker, any more than the further statistics showing that of this number, 40,462, or nearly two-thirds of the total number of accidents during the year, were caused by privately-owned motor cars and motor cycles, suggested the desirability of either teaching motorists to behave or abolishing them.

Why in God's name all this hurry? Sixty miles an hour is not ten times more wonderful than six miles an hour, nor is the hare inherently a better beast than the tortoise. Why then should we hurry? Certainly not in order to save time. The man who hurries most always has the least time to spare. The agricultural labourer who hurries not at all has far more time on his hands than the Napoleon of business who does nothing else.

Why, moreover, go anywhere at all, much less hurry there? There is nothing at the end of any road better than may be found beside

it, though there would be no travel, did men believe it. And who knows but that beauty may be lurking in the hours wasted by the wayside?

LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

But we cannot expect a progressive age to stop for beauty. Having spent all its life in doing, it has lost the art of living. In the modern world a man spends four-fifths of his waking life in getting the means to make life possible, and has only one-fifth left for living. As a consequence he makes a thoroughly bad job of living through sheer lack of practice. If life is a problem, it requires more than a jaded brain for its solution; if it is an art, it requires more than a couple of hours a day for the mastery of its technique. It is to be expected, therefore, that the ordinary civilized man should have only the vaguest notions of how to amuse himself. Having lost the art of entertaining himself, he pays others to entertain him. Hence his conception of amusement

is of something for which one has to pay. Having paid for things all his life, and spent all his energy in obtaining the wherewithal to pay for them, it is only natural that he should think that he can purchase happiness. In consequence of this belief it is doubtful whether the general level of happiness has at any time been so low as it is in the modern world. Instead of being happy, except when he has a positive reason for being unhappy, the civilized man is unhappy unless he has a positive reason for being happy. Cut off from all instinctive and ancestral causes of happiness, from country sights and sounds, from dancing and singing, from going on the water in boats and digging in the earth, he is compelled to substitute for these such adventitious pleasures as his income can command. Happiness, therefore becomes a matter of acquiring external things or goods.

Since the need for these things is not instinctive, it has to be generated by habit. Men cultivate new wants for the pleasure of satisfying them. But an acquired want which

begins by ministering to our pleasures, ends by increasing our pains. Thus the man who smokes four pipes a day finds in each a positive pleasure; he is comforted when he smokes, and experiences no discomfort when he does not. But the cigarette fiend smokes to allay a need and not to experience a pleasure. Such pleasure as he obtains from his drug is conditioned by the preceding state of need, and is only brought into being by the pain which the need has caused. Hence the lamentable spectacle of the excessive smoker! Smoking having ceased to give him pleasure, while the lack of it causes him pain, he must expend an ever greater quantity of time, energy and money to obtain an ever diminishing quantity of pleasure.

What is true of smoking is true of drink and of drugs; it is true of all artificially created needs which men seek to substitute for the instinctive pleasures which they have lost.

The Nemesis which waits upon the pleasures of the civilized man can be discerned most clearly if we take as an illustration that tri-

umph of civilization, the retired business man. Throughout his working life he has been dominatingly efficient. He has shown a *flair* for business, a sense of the moment, a capacity for choosing men and for using them to the best advantage. All his life he has been doing things with a minimum of waste and a maximum of effectiveness. But they have been the wrong things. Efficiency indeed may be defined as doing the wrong things in the right way. At no time during his long working life has he learned to live. And now, having retired, he is thrown upon his own resources, and, since there is nothing else to do, he must at last learn that art that he has so long neglected.

And, of course, he bungles the business horribly. Having worked all his life at making money, his one conception of leisure is to work at something else. So he spends large sums for the privilege of cultivating some dangerous or laborious hobby, mountain climbing, desert exploration or yacht racing, in which he can only induce other people to

accompany him by paying them large salaries. Or he takes up some game in which he is continually humiliated by the prowess of younger men. Or he goes and kills something. This last device is very popular. Many men consider that the good life consists in depriving other beings of life. Hence the retired business man shoots big game, fires at half-blinded pigeons loosed from little cages at Monte Carlo, or careers after foxes.

Failing these pursuits, he offers large sums to professional entertainers to do for him what he cannot do for himself, has his private jazz band, and hires his box on first nights. In all this he is working hard in order to avoid being bored. Boredom is his great enemy, since, having no instinctive delight in life, he is intolerably bored unless he is being violently amused.

Having rendered himself unfit for his own or anyone else's company, he desires to be taken out of himself. So he craves for sensation and excitement. To this craving may be attributed most of the vulgarity, ostentation

and even brutality of New York society. Thus we read: "According to a New York correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph,* a dance was given recently at a garage with its shooting and bowling galleries and rows of Aunt Sallies. . . . With the ice the chef took in a huge cake with sixteen lighted candles. It was cut, and from it sprung a tiger, which crouched and then leaped towards the hostess, whose health was drunk with enthusiasm." [1]

Or from among many similar announcements take the following:—

"MIDNITE FROLIC SAT. NITE.
"AVENUE THEATER.

"Peppy Burlesque by 50 nifty jazzers, mostly girls. Make reservations now."

We seem, as so often when contemplating

[1] Compare: "To the cutting of this Boar, there came (not he that had served up the Fowl) but a two-handed fellow . . . who, drawing his Wood-Knife, made a large hole in the Boar's side, out of which flew a number of blackbirds which were caught in a trice as they fluttered about the Room by some Fowlers who stood in readiness for that purpose." A scene from Trimalchio's supper, from the Satyricon of Petronius.

the habits of the plutocracy taking its pleasures, to be back in the days of the Roman Empire. Modern America "on the bust" is extraordinarily like Trimalchio's freedmen "on the bust."

The company that graced Trimalchio's board was very rich, newly rich and very vulgar. For sheer ostentation and bad taste it went unchallenged for nearly two thousand years, until, when the twentieth century gave birth to the brood of American business men, it was compelled to acknowledge a posterity which has outstripped its ancestors. The rich American's table witnesses the same superfluity of expensive things, the same dearth of good ones, for he is no more of an epicure and no less of a glutton than Trimalchio; pointless jokes and imbecile anecdotes pass for humour, stale platitudes and threadbare *clichés* for conversation, purse-proud complacency and paunchy self-satisfaction for dignity, rough horseplay and inane catcalls for conviviality. Such were the amusements of the company of Trimalchio. Lust is organized on a grand

scale in the shape of "nifty jazzers, mostly girls," as lust was organized at the supper of Trimalchio. When "nifty jazzers" pall, the rich American turns from "pleasure" to "sport." "Sport" that has to pander to the craving for sensation of big business in its shirt sleeves must possess two requisites: it must be expensive and exciting; if, in addition, it is brutal, so much the better. Gladiators filled the bill for Trimalchio, but Christianity has proscribed gladiators among civilized people as barbarous, so we have heavy-weight boxers instead. There is not so much blood, but there is some, and the expensiveness of the kept boxing experts warms the heart of every properly constituted financier. He is getting the best that money can buy, and he knows it. It has been estimated that at the fight between Dempsey and Firpo, which took place in America in the autumn of 1923, "Dempsey got something like £1,000 for each punch that he made, and in all gained £80,000. The two principals made £100,000 between them, and £300,000 was taken by the promoters of the

fight. The fight itself lasted just under five minutes." This is paying for one's pleasure with a vengeance; moreover, a fight that lasts only five minutes is some hustle.

It is in the same strain of ostentatious disregard for money in the interests of "sport" that we hear of the American golf champions driving golf balls into the sea from the deck of the liner that brought them to England. They are stated to have sunk no less than 5,000 golf balls in this way during the course of the voyage. So also would have driven the freedmen of Trimalchio!

When all the distractions money can buy have been tried and found wanting, the big business man usually ends by returning to business and continuing to make money which he does not want, in despair of making life tolerable without the hard labour to which he has been accustomed. Meanwhile tramps and artists, civilization's misfits, are drawing happiness from the smell of the earth after a shower, or the contemplation of a sunset! How much richer would rich men find their

lives if they cared for money only a little less! . . .

THE WORSHIP OF MONEY

THESE, then, are the men, vulgar, pretentious, ostentatious and vain, destitute alike of any power of mind or grace of body, ignorant of the past and careless of the future, who set the tone of modern society. These are the men whom the lesser fry strain and break themselves to imitate; the lesser fry, who set the standard for the clerks, who in turn provoke the emulation of the workers. The power of money has so permeated every stratum of American society, that to the American no other object of desire seems conceivable. His standard of value measures solely in terms of wealth. The artist, the scientist, the musician, the statesman and the author are held of no account unless their claims to consideration are backed by money, while the rich man is king of any company he chooses to enter.

So true is this that an instinctive valuation in terms of money has become to most Americans second nature. A friend of mine once passed a voyage in company with a family from Philadelphia. They were loud in their city's praises. It possessed, in addition to its parks, motors and public buildings, a very fine collection of millionaires. I forget exactly how many there were, but the collection was larger than that which adorned any other town of similar size.

The Philadelphians were eloquent about these men. They were kindly, affable and genial, without a trace of snobbishness, and conversed quite freely with ordinary citizens, for all the world as if they had been ordinary citizens themselves.

"And do any really nice people know them?" asked my friend innocently. The Americans seemed disconcerted for a moment, and then, assuming that he had unwittingly made a mistake, hastened to put matters right by assuring him that the millionaires were

quite nice and were willing to know all kinds of people.

I have since asked a similar question of several Americans, and on each occasion it has been assumed that my question has been wrongly phrased, my intention being to find out not who consented to know the millionaires, but whom the millionaires consented to know. It was not thought possible by these Americans that a man could not value the acquaintance of Mr. Bullions Boundermere.

CONCLUSIONS

The phenomena which I have briefly outlined are the direct results of failure in the art of life. This failure is due to a lack of leisure which prevents men from making a success of anything but work. It is the industrial revolution and the mechanization of productive processes which are responsible for this lack of leisure. Instead of using machines as their servants men have made them their masters. So long as men show themselves so little able

to control the machinery they have been clever enough to invent, each fresh advance in mechanical progress is a fresh disaster. So long as knowledge is sought only for its utilitarian value, it will take its revenge by depriving that value of reality. Advances in practical knowledge, when they are not absolutely harmful, will continue to nullify each other. The increase in medical skill, due to man's advances in physiology, will be nullified by the increased power of destructiveness due to man's advances in chemistry. Apes quarrel, perhaps, more than human beings, but they do not do each other so much harm; they are less able to cure themselves when sick, but they are rarely sick. Broadcasting has put music within the reach of millions, but never did millions hear such bad music. We have increased our power over Nature only to condemn the mass of mankind to spiritual wretchedness for want of her.

Until, therefore, we have the knowledge to direct and control our "advances," we are better without the knowledge that makes

them. Knowledge must be desired for its own sake before knowledge can be fruitfully used for man's sake. Physics and mathematics must be valued for themselves and not because they fill the pockets of millionaires. Philosophy may lead nowhere, but it is worth going nowhere to find it. An absorption in the utilitarian aspects of knowledge does preclude, and will continue to preclude, its cultivation for its own sake. In this connection it is significant that America, where knowledge is encouraged because of its money-making capacity, has given birth to none of the great modern discoveries in physics and mathematics. Yet it is upon these discoveries that the applications which America values depend. Few of the great scientists have cared greatly about conferring benefits upon humanity; yet these are the men to whom such benefits as civilization brings are due. In the long run it is upon the existence of men who care for nothing but truth, that the success of the business man who cares for nothing but dollars is based.

Hence Americans would be well advised even in the interests of practical results, to give some encouragement to men who care nothing for practical results. Even if they are incapable of valuing truth and knowledge for themselves, they will find it pays to endow those who value only truth and knowledge.

Part Two: Beauty

BEAUTY

LITERATURE AND ART

Beauty being an end in itself, the production of works of beauty both in art and in literature is a good which demands no justification. Judged, therefore, by the standard of things which are valuable in and for themselves, a civilization which maintains a high level of beauty in its works of art and literature is a good civilization, while bad and vulgar production is a mark of bad and decadent communities.

Beauty cannot, however, be commanded at will, nor can it be purchased by dollars. It is not a house built by men's hands, of which you may possess yourself of the key and enter when you please; it is not even a flower that you may pluck, but a song that rises strangely and suddenly into the night from behind the hedge as you pass, and dies down again. Like pleasure, it eludes those who seek it directly.

Culture which consists of the direct pursuit of beauty is the mark of a decadent civilization, and America which prides itself upon its culture, produces little art and less beauty.

Other modern civilizations tend to become increasingly like America in this respect. "It isn't a question of money, but a question of taste," said Mr. Nevinson, the artist, to a reporter in a recent characteristic outburst. "Hot baths and internal combustion engines, more hot baths and more internal combustion engines. Luxury and movement. Hotels and more hotels. Do they want anything else?" (What sounded like a moan.)

"Art? They hate it. They hate beauty. They hate anything artistic or intellectual. Hot baths and hotels, motor cars and money. . . . We are all becoming americanized. You see it everywhere. America, America, America—always creeping up—crowding out everything—hot baths and hotels—money for everything except pictures—America, America, America! Everywhere, over everything." (What sounded like a sigh.)

"I am sincere about this. Art is dying. Since 1870 the whole of art has been slowly dying away. Dying and dying and dying. Within 20 or 30 years it will be dead. And then we shall all do something useful. There will be no artists, no beauty, nothing that interferes with the supremely useful occupation of destroying each other." (What sounded like a laugh.)

Mr. Nevinson's remarks may serve as a text for this part of our book. Let us begin to embroider it. First as regards literature! On this head it should be sufficient to say that the films are the literature of America. The films speak for themselves. But how come they to speak as they do?

FILMS AND WRITERS

America is the great democracy of the world, and in a democracy even works of art must be produced democratically. "In America," we are told, "according to the writings of those familiar with the making of films

there, a picture has to pass a hundred and one editors and experts. It is no longer the work of one man but of a committee. The various editors and experts are organized into departments."

It is now possible to understand what is the matter with American films. But what about Chaplin? Chaplin writes and plans his own films, and accepts no dictation from any committee. But, then, Chaplin is a genius! Also he is not an American.

But Americans have a reverence for antiquity! Even if they cannot produce literature for themselves, their admiration for the Classics is famous. This admiration is continually evinced in the adaptation of famous Classics for the films. How are these treated? Here perhaps it is better that one who knows should speak for himself.

"Some time ago," writes a well-known film adapter and scenario writer, "I was commissioned by a film company to adapt a very famous classic. It was a 'period' story, and the climax consisted in the death of the central

character—one of the famous deaths in English fiction. It was not a suitable story for filming, and I protested against its being done, but was, of course, overruled.

"I spent nearly four months on the adaptation, rewriting the entire scenario no less than three times. Eventually I delivered it. I was then requested, in view of the importance of the subject, to attend a 'conference' at the Company's offices and to read my script. I faced the ordeal with a good deal of nervousness, expecting to be confronted by a number of literary and dramatic experts. But I need not have worried—for the 'conference' consisted of the managing director, two directors, the publicity manager, the studio manager, the cashier, two typists, the producer and myself. And, with the exception of the producer, not one of them had read the book!

"I read the script, and a 'discussion' followed, the following being some of the points raised by the assembled 'experts':

"The story was gloomy—suggest introducing a low-comedy character.

"Make two of the secondary characters marry, in order to 'introduce a bit of romance' into it.

"Shift the period to present day, in order to save expense!

"Eliminate the death of the central character, and make him recover at the last moment!

"When in the course of the very heated discussion on these suggestions I pointed out that the public would never stand such liberties being taken with a famous classic, I was informed condescendingly, that the public, for the most part, had never read the book, and so wouldn't know, and that the author was dead and couldn't object! I then asked, very pertinently, why the book had been selected for filming, and was told because it was out of copyright, and the title would be a 'draw.' After which it was decided to change the title!

"The film was produced, and provoked a howl of protest from all quarters. The producer and myself got all the blame!

"As I was leaving the theatre at which the

film had been 'trade shown' (sincerely hoping that no one would recognize me), I was button-holed by the managing director, who asked me what I thought of the result of my four months' work and worry. I told him! But he only laughed, and said that the film had booked well, and that was all that mattered!

"He went on to tell me that 'Cranford' had been suggested to him for filming. Did I think it would make a good film? I replied cautiously, that I thought it might, with careful production. He said that he had heard that it was out of copyright. I agreed that it was.

" 'Right O!' he said, 'we'll do it. By the way, what is it—a book or a play?'

"And while I was still gasping, he announced:

" 'I've got a good one for you to do next—one of Marion Crawford's. One of the best things *she* ever wrote—*and she was a clever woman, too!*' "[1]

In the light of the above testimony (quoted

[1] W. J. Elliott in the *Daily News*, October, 1923.

verbatim from the *Daily News)* to the blatant ignorance of a body of men who exert over the mind of the race a greater influence for good or for ill than all the priests, politicians, publicists, lecturers and writers put together, it is possible to credit the fact that a company under whose auspices a film version of *Dombey and Son* was being produced, recently caused a paragraph to be inserted in a number of papers announcing that "the firm of Dombey and Son wish it to be understood that they are not paying for the free publicity afforded by this masterly production."

Perhaps, at this point, it would be better to leave the subject of films.

America has produced no writers of genius and no indigenous literature. The exceptions to this generalization are so few as to reinforce rather than disprove it. They are four, E. A. Poe, Walt Whitman, Herman Melville and Mark Twain. America did not treat any of them well. Nowhere among communities of literate men, save only in the British Colonies, is the proportion of men of genius to the rest

of the community so low. Of bad books, of course, there is no end; but even of these, according to J. Gordon Coogler, the one famous Southern American poet, there is a growing dearth in the Southern States. As he well remarks in his pathetic couplet: "Alas, for the South! Her books have grown fewer —She never was much given to literature."

The few redeeming voices that are raised in this desert of banality are harsh and strident in tone. Mr. Cabell, Mr. Mencken, Mr. Hergesheimer and Mr. Sinclair Lewis are writers of whom any country might be proud; but good as they are, their goodness consists mainly in a protest against the prevailing badness.

What are the reasons for this dearth of beauty? Chief among them, as we have already suggested, is the fact that beauty is coy and does not yield to direct assault, even by financiers. The vigorous methods of efficient business do not attract her. In addition, however, to this very natural repugnance, we may perhaps distinguish three special causes

for the absence of beauty in the productions of our most civilized nation. These are the deliberate cultivation of uniformity, the patronage of big business, and immaturity of mind. I propose to consider these separately.

THE CULTIVATION OF UNIFORMITY

America is commonly known as "the melting pot"; it consists, that is to say, of a heterogeneous collection of persons belonging to an indefinite number of races. A very small proportion only of its inhabitants are indigenous to the soil. Thus, in 1833 the city of Chicago contained 350 people; it now contains 2,884,827, subdivided into Americans, Germans, Poles, Russians, Irishmen, Negroes, Bohemians, Swedes, Norwegians, Italians, Austrians, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Englishmen, Canadians, Danes, Scots and Dutchmen. The foreign-born population of Chicago is nearly equal to the native population.

A hundred years ago there were only 3,000 Jews in the whole of America. Now there are

1,500,000 in New York alone. These figures, produced by St. John Ervine in the course of a recent lecture, suggest the following reflections.

Enormous masses of heterogeneous elements can be assimilated only by vigorous and drastic measures. At the best there will be indigestion in the body politic necessitating careful dieting. Careful dieting involves plain intellectual fare, which eschews variety and aims at uniformity. It is, indeed, only by the cultivation of a deliberate uniformity that elements of such diverse heterogeneity can be welded and assimilated. It is only a homogeneous nation that can afford to let its members be various; it is only in a unity that individuals can achieve individuality. A nation whose roots are deep in the soil can suffer its members to spread outwards like the branches of a tree; but a nation whose roots are nowhere must for very safety drive its members inwards like a flock of sheep. The one is centrifugal, encouraging variety lest it coalesce into an undifferentiated lump; the other is centripetal, fearing diversity

lest it split asunder into its component parts. Hence, while the citizens of the first can follow their bent, those of the second must follow the herd.

These considerations may serve to explain why England, France and Germany normally produce individuals, and outcrop occasionally into geniuses,[1] while America can afford only standard products. Whereas in Europe the height of originality is genius, in America the height of originality is skill in concealing origins.

It follows that every effort is made in America to secure uniformity—uniformity in conduct, uniformity in clothes, uniformity in thought. America is and seeks increasingly to be the perfect Paradise of Robots. Robots live by standardization, and standardization is the abiding impression made on the foreigner. Thus Mr. Ervine thinks of America "as a

[1] Mr. Ervine estimates that men of supreme genius in letters have been produced in England at the rate of one in seventy-five years for six hundred years; men of considerable genius and great talent in letters have been produced in England at the rate of one in every eight years for six hundred years. It is needless to add that the percentage in America is not so high.

place in which standardization of minds has been achieved with almost as much success as the standardization of material comfort." He notices "the tendency of young men to dress exactly alike," and "the tendency to make each village on the track from New York to Chicago look like all the other villages."

With this cult of uniformity goes a pathetic belief in personality. Since all Americans are alike, each one wishes to be different; he wants to be unique, to exhibit characteristics of force and vigour which will mark him off from his fellows, in other words, to achieve a personality. In no country is personality valued as it is in America, and in no country is it so rare. Since it refuses to manifest itself naturally, it has to be manufactured. Agencies exist for its cultivation; in books and correspondence courses they tell you how to be unique, while psycho-analysts flourish by the simple process of telling you that you are unique.

What is true of individuals is true of cities. Each city in the United States seeks to possess some special claim to distinction. It must at

any cost be known to be different from its fellows. Members of Rotary Clubs, we are told, "attending conventions, try by flag-waving and shouting slogans to impress the supremacy of their own towns on the inhabitants of other places. The Rotarians of Denver . . ." have recently achieved a particularly startling success. "Starting out for a convention at Cleveland, they packed a refrigerator car full of snow which is perennial on the Rocky Mountains, and arranged a snowball battle, just to make it clear that Colorado has the distinction . . . of being really different."

To the deliberate inculcation of uniformity in thought and conduct I shall return in the last part of this book. For the present I am concerned with the effects of uniformity of behaviour upon the artist.

Now the artist is by definition a person different from his fellows. We may think of him as a man who penetrates through the superficial appearances of the material world to the permanent reality which underlies them.

Conceived in this way he possesses the power to see the significant form in material objects stripped of the purely sensuous material which distorts and obscures it. He can disentangle the beauty that manifests itself in things from the things in which it is manifested. Or again, we may think of him as the chosen instrument created by the power that drives evolution forward to give conscious expression to its own instinctive purpose. Responsible neither for what he sees nor for what he thinks, the artist is a man directly inspired; he can no more give an account of himself and of the power that moves him, than the fountain pen can explain or justify the words which it is compelled to form. The artist and the fountain pen are alike, channels for the utterance of things beyond their ken.

Whichever view we take of the function and nature of art, it is clear that the artist is no ordinary man. Whether seer or prophet, discoverer of a beauty that is there, or creator of a beauty that he has called from nothingness, the artist will see things differently from

the ordinary man. To the ordinary man a plate is always a plate; to the artist it is a halo or a lavatory pan according to circumstances; the artist can see a sky as green, a lake as orange, and a man as an assemblage of triangles and rectangles.

Consider, now, the ordinary man. The ordinary man, being too busy or too stupid to invent one for himself, must buy his code of morals ready-made at the social shop. In Persia he buys a code which permits him four wives; in America he gets a less generous article which gives him only one. Still, so long as he can find somebody to tell him what is right, the ordinary man is fairly satisfied. What he hates above all things is the burden of thinking and deciding for himself; hence his insistent demand for someone or something, preferably infallible like the Deity, to tell him what he ought to think and what he ought to do. No ordinary man wishes to act freely any more than he wishes to think freely; he likes to learn his duty and his creed; that

is why the Army and the Church have always been his two most popular institutions.

The artist on the other hand insists on making his morals for himself; sometimes they are higher than those of society, like Christ's, sometimes lower, like Casanova's. Society on the whole, while disliking any difference on principle, prefers them to be lower; it crucifies Christ and laughs at Casanova. But, whether higher or lower, the artist's code is always different. The artist acts as a signpost pointing the way to a new conception of beauty or to a new level of thought and conduct. That is why society, which persecutes artists during their life, so often ennobles them after their death, having moved up to the level indicated in the meantime. As to conduct, it is notorious that an artist who, in preference to doing the work which the world offers him, insists on doing the work which he wants to do whether the world wants it or not, is usually starved to death in a garret for his pains.

Now all this sort of thing, annoying enough at any time, is particularly troublesome to a

nation desiring uniformity. It suggests new standards of conduct and new methods of valuation; it sets up new gods in opposition to the gods of efficiency and production; it interferes with standardization and cataloguing, and wastes people's time by distracting their attention. Lives devoted to success have no time for beauty; nations striving for uniformity have no use for idiosyncrasy.

Hence America has a special reason for suppressing artists, unless, of course, they are celebrities, when, with its usual recognition of success, it pays them the salaries of cotton kings, thereby turning their heads. But celebrities are not artists, or at any rate not for long. All of which is another story and brings me to my second reason.

THE PATRONAGE OF BIG BUSINESS

America, of course, is a young country. It is not so many years since pioneers trekked across prairies, crossed unnavigable rivers, hewed a way through virgin backwoods and

sowed corn with one hand while keeping off Red Indians with the other. There was the phase of gold digging, of miners bristling with oath and belching with whisky, and of the stories of Bret Harte; and there was, and is, the phase of cattle farming, featuring lassoos, buffalo herds, prairie fires, cowboys wedded to the saddle, and all other phenomena with which the films have made us familiar.

All this activity, of course, went for something; it had its effects. After a time it began to go somewhere very definite, in point of fact into the pockets of business men. It there formed the basis upon which was erected the fabric of high finance, and brought us to the Wall Street phase. This features the American financiers, a race of men who deal in millions, grow protuberant equatorially, assume a dominating manner, suffer from indigestion, and go in fear of their wives. The Big Business phase is America's most salient characteristic, and the one that most visibly impresses the observer to-day.

Now none of these phases has engendered

an atmosphere particularly favourable to the encouragement of art or the cultivation of beauty.

The pioneers and cowboys, having to overcome natural obstacles, developed the qualities needful in the struggle against nature—courage, energy, enterprise, patience and endurance. The big business man, having to overcome his rivals, has developed the qualities appropriate to success in finance—energy, initiative, foresight, greed, cunning, insensitiveness, and a manner which varies between the domineering, the patronizing and the vulgarly hearty. Each class naturally believes that everything that is desirable can be achieved by the same qualities that have won for it success in its own particular struggle. The former would assault beauty as if it were a river to be crossed or a piece of quartz to be broken; the latter approaches it as if it were a competitor to be circumvented or a rival to be bought out. The cowboy employs his usual weapons of hardihood and pluck, the business man girds himself with his dollars.

Not indeed that beauty worries the cowboy much. But the big business man regards culture as the fitting appanage of a life devoted to monetary success, and accordingly sets about acquiring that elusive but indispensable something that there is about culture by the same methods as those which have won him his dollars, using his dollars as auxiliaries to buy what he cannot take by assault. He sets his teeth, goes to lectures, patronizes artists and buys pictures.

It will be interesting and not unamusing to pause for a moment to consider the phenomenon presented by the American business man in search of culture.

Lectures to Business Men

There is first and foremost the attempt to obtain culture from lectures. These have a special vogue during the "luncheon hour." Wall Street magnates imbibe concentrated culture and uplift in tabloid form during half-hours snatched from the pursuit of efficiency

in the morning and the absorption of vitamins sufficient for the pursuit of more efficiency in the afternoon. These endeavours would be pathetic were it not for the atmosphere of patronage which surrounds them. For the rich American regards culture as a luxury, not different in kind from lapdogs and central heating. He accordingly buys it at the lecture shop, and, if he is rich enough, is prepared to pay through the nose in order to get the best that money can buy. The only known standard for appraising the worth of different kinds of culture is afforded by the celebrities of the lecturers. Superfine brands are purveyed by the most famous, and are paid for accordingly, while culture of slightly inferior quality is supplied by lesser luminaries.

Celebrities being equal, there are two subsidiary tests to be applied; the lecturer must have pep, which means among other things that he must not take too long, and he must have uplift. The insistence upon pep arises partly from the brevity of the time that can be subtracted from money-making, partly

from the belief, inherent in the breast of every good American, that a good thing, in order that it may be good, must move quickly. Hustle is the keynote of efficiency in all known things; hustle, therefore, must be the keynote of efficiency in those things which are unknown, such as culture. As to uplift, it is always comforting to know that things are getting better and going somewhere; and the American, being sentimental, requires spiritual comfort above all things.

The provision of public lectures to American business men has long been a standing joke among European celebrities. They are approached by competing agencies eager to arrange tours at so much a lecture. The celebrity closes with the best offer, and is duly booked for a tour of lectures some months ahead. The methods of engagement are exactly similar to those employed for music hall stars, the only difference being that the terms offered, even to the most famous lecturers, are considerably lower. Once arrived in the United States, the lecturer is "run"

exactly as if he were a new dentifrice or brand of chewing gum. He is advertised, boomed, boosted and harried all over the surface of the Continent. For the most part he is profoundly uncomfortable; he travels too much, eats too much, and sleeps too little; and he must keep his spirits permanently at the high level necessary for the bearing of Americans gladly. In return for these discomforts he is well paid and much fêted. If he is wise, he supplies pep and uplift to seekers after culture any number of times from two to six a day. If he is foolish, he occasionally says what he thinks: in this case the tour is not a success.

Tours have also been known to fail for other reasons. One distinguished foreigner, a man of European reputation, who was imported by an enterprising agency at colossal expense, proved such a failure that the audience at his first lecture broke up in confusion, and the remaining engagements were cancelled. The reason for this contretemps was the omission on the part of the agency to discover whether

the lecturer could speak American. As he could not even speak English, and his attempts to read the lecture, which he had had translated, were rendered ineffectual by his bizarre pronunciation, nobody could understand what he said. It was thus discovered that the appetite for celebrity of even an American audience proves unequal to the strain of more than half an hour's incomprehensible jargon. No further lectures were given, and the agency was sadly out of pocket and temper by the tour.

A distinguished English lady, well known in political circles, was also a failure. She failed partly through pride, which made her unwilling to descend to the intellectual level necessary for success, and partly through laziness. It is to be presumed, that is to say, that it was laziness which made her refuse to take the trouble to learn those rudiments of the American language which are indispensable to an Englishman who wishes to be understood, and not a protestant æsthetic sense. Cases of failure of this, or indeed of any kind,

are, however, rare. As a rule the audience is too impressed with the celebrity of the lecturer to notice what he says, and disperses contentedly in the belief that it has had its money's worth. The lecturer returns to Europe at the end of his tour half dead with exhaustion and the strain of keeping his mind at the low level necessary for his lectures, but considerably enriched both in pocket and anecdote. During and immediately after the War the foreign lecturer had an enormous vogue. Never had there been such a spoiling of the Philistines. There appeared to be no limits to the gullibility of this enormously rich and enormously uneducated plutocracy. American business was a gigantic milch cow, whose udders could be milked indefinitely by the supple fingers of the famous. More recently, however, the udders have shown signs of running dry. Too many lecturers have taken of late to expressing, on occasions, their real opinions. These naturally arouse distaste, since nobody likes to be told the truth, least of all Americans.

Thus the market is becoming spoiled, and even the most circumspect find it harder to arrange tours.

Beauty and Learning

It may appear to some shameful to impose in this way upon the simple American. And yet he asks for it. He asks for it pathetically and insistently, desperately desiring culture and believing that, provided he pays highly enough, culture will come his way.

And beauty, insulted by the coarse approaches of this crude new lover posturing in spats and white waistcoats, is entitled to revenge. She knows that he does not love her for herself, that she is desired only to embellish and complete his up-to-date establishment. She knows that no American city which wishes to be replete with every modern convenience can afford to neglect her, and her disinclination to oblige is understandable.

As Chum Frink says in his speech in Bab-

bitt, when advocating expenditure on a high-class symphony orchestra for Zenith:

"Culture has become as necessary an adornment and advertisement for a city to-day as pavements or bank-clearances. It's Culture, in theatres and art galleries and so on, that brings thousands of visitors to New York every year, and, to be frank, for all our splendid attainments we haven't yet got the culture of a New York or Chicago or Boston—or at least we don't get the credit for it. The thing to do then, as a live bunch of go-getters, is to *capitalize Culture;* to go right out and grab it.

"Pictures and books are fine for those that have the time to study 'em, but they don't shoot out on the road and holler 'This is what little old Zenith can put up in the way of Culture.' That's precisely what a symphony orchestra does do. Look at the credit Minneapolis and Cincinnati get. An orchestra with first-class musickers and a swell conductor—and I believe we ought to do the thing up brown and get one of the highest-paid conductors on the market, providing he ain't a

Hun—it goes right into Beantown,[1] and New York and Washington; it plays at the best theatres to the most cultured and moneyed people; it gives such class-advertising as a town can get in no other way; and the guy who is so short-sighted as to crab this orchestra proposition is passing up the chance to impress the glorious name of Zenith on some big New York millionaire *that might—that might establish a branch factory here!*" [2]

And as it is with beauty, so it is with learning.

An American's library is the receipt for the tribute paid by the pockets of stupidity to the prestige of thought. Now receipts are not read even in America. Thus an American millionaire, having bought a new house, and wishing to stock his library, recently sent an order to a bookseller for five thousand books of specified heights, widths and thicknesses.

In the same vein of pathetic vulgarity is the prevalent belief in America that culture is

[1] Boston. [2] My italics.

guaranteed by the presence of Professors. Professors in America grow like asparagus in May. Appoint a Professor in any subject, and you have made the subject your own; nay more, you may shortly hope to produce a world treatise on it. Of all forms of unteachable art, save perhaps the lyric, the short story is the most vague and elusive. Excellence in the short story so far from being commanded cannot even be stated: it is an essence, a bouquet, an aroma, indispensable yet unanalysable, shunning rules and laughing at recipes. Yet in this subject of all others America has chosen to have her Professor. But the Professor of Short Stories will no doubt shortly pale before a Professor of Lyrics.

These things go far to explain the sterility of American art. Beauty is not to be knocked down to the highest bidder, nor culture cajoled by advertisement. America might buy up all the pictures by all the old masters in the world; she would own but the bare walls of beauty's deserted dwelling. The occupant herself

would have fled, affrighted by a race of men in whose souls she could find no resting place.

THE FAILURE TO GROW UP

Wit, Tea and Heroes

There is about the American a certain crudeness and immaturity of mind, a lack of mellowness and poise. America seems sometimes to be inhabited by a population of public schoolboys ranging in age from fourteen to seventeen. Her citizens do not grow up; they fail to mature.

It is difficult to explain in detail what is lacking here, since mellowness is an indefinable essence not to be caught by a phrase. A few examples must serve, in the hope that, taken together, they will suggest what I wish to convey, like an impressionistic portrait whose outlines may be filled in according to taste.

Americans have humour; they are, indeed, markedly humorous, but they have no wit. This is because, while humour is man's natural

inheritance, wit is the acquirement of civilization. An immature civilization will indulge in broad jests, in practical jokes and horseplay, but it will never be witty. Wit and irony, whimsicality and fantasy can only flourish in a world in which brain has temporarily triumphed over brawn. They are the indulgences of a society which has become sufficiently familiar with ideas to manipulate them for its entertainment, which can entertain beliefs as an intellectual exercise without embracing them as true or rejecting them as false, and which has sufficiently mastered its intellectual inheritance to be at play with it.

Now it is precisely in this difference of intellectual content that the distinction between wit and humour lies. While the ability to jest about serious things is the mark of a mellow mind, the desire to throw a lump of bread at a friend is the mark of a public schoolboy. The American is still in the schoolboy stage. Practical jokes and horseplay he understands well enough; but he can neither make an epigram nor understand it when it is made. He

can be frivolous about silly things; but he cannot be frivolous about solemn things. He will make an apple-pie bed for a friend, but he will not make a lampoon on the Deity. An American, in short, cannot bear to hear serious things joked about, because he has not yet learned to take them other than seriously. He is still too unused to thought to do other than fear it. *Nuances* of expression and subtleties of intonation, *double entendres* that have only one possible meaning, the farce of solemnity and the gloomines of farces, the humour that lurks in tragedy and the sadness that underlies the Homeric laughter of gods and philosophers, these complications are beyond the American. The world for him is printed in blacks and whites, in sermons and in jokes. Swift tells us of one of his friends that "His jokes were sermons, and his sermons jokes," but, he is speaking a language which no American can understand.

Parallel with the development of wit is the development of afternoon tea. Tea is an æsthetic meal. It satisfies a spiritual rather

than a bodily need. It stands in relation to our other meals as does the bouquet of an old wine to a cask of beer. It is quite unnecessary, and is merely an excuse for wasting time elegantly. Americans know how to waste money, but they have not learned how to waste time. They can understand eating to maintain life, but they cannot understand eating to promote leisure. Consequently they do not have afternoon tea. They drink tea, but they drink it when they want it, and they usually want coffee.

Public schoolboys are great hero-worshippers; so are Americans. History for them is a brightly-lit stage on which heroes contend with villains, and beautiful ladies, who are no better than they ought to be, pull the strings. Americans entertain the same beliefs. There are no men in an American's conception of history, there are not even movements and tendencies, there are only great men and bad men.

This view of history is, of course, a romantic delusion born of the cinema. It comes of

seeing life as a series of "close ups." The ordinary grown-up man, who has passed beyond the *Boys' Own Paper* attitude to life, knows well enough that tendencies and movements form the ground swell of the sea of history on which actions are no more than the surface froth, while personages, however eminent, are merely the mouth pieces of the ideas which exist and prevail independently of them. Or again, he will think of the revolutionary hero, of Lenin or of Mirabeau, as the man who sets the match to a slowly accumulating pile of tinder. The great man neither conceives events nor brings them forth; he is, at most, a midwife at their birth.

This conclusion, which is borne with irresistible force upon every serious student of history, is repugnant to the schoolboy mind. It is not sufficiently melodramatic, and it knocks too many great men off their pedestals. It passes the rapier of historical research through the ribs of the hero, and lets out a little gas and sawdust; and Americans who share the schoolboy's preference for the highly-

coloured portaits of melodrama to the sober drabs of historians, embrace the great man interpretation of events with the persistent credulity of immature minds anxious to cling to their romantic illusions.

Washing and Dumb-bells

Another symptom of immaturity is the American preoccupation with cleanliness. I do not wish to imply that people with developed minds are necessarily dirty—although it is true that cats, Chinese and other mature beings, wash very little. What I do maintain is that intelligent people have far too many calls on their attention and interest to be for ever scouring and scraping their skins. Continual washing is all very well for people who have nothing better to do. The addiction to washing is, indeed, one of the most salient features of decadent civilizations. The citizens of Athens past her prime, and of Rome in the days of the Empire, were for ever in their baths. They made the business of washing at

once a fetish and a social event; the baths were the places for gossip, scandal and song.

Washing in all its forms is one of the few sensual pleasures which is not forbidden by American Puritanism. Hence Americans indulge in it without shame or moderation. With this immoderate cleanliness of the person go tidiness and the cult of physical efficiency. Preoccupation with these things is a phase to which our youth is subject in its later school days, but which does not as a rule persist into adult life. The youthful-minded American, however, never seems to outgrow his addiction to dumb-bells. Morning after morning, with the aid of chest developers and breathing exercises, he endeavours to attain a physical fitness which the whole of the rest of his life is designed to render impossible. Over-eating, under-sleeping and lack of exercise are fatal to the possession of a healthy body. Nor should the business man desire one. "A short life and a gluttonous one," is a reasonably good ideal, and one suited to his temperament. For such an one to torture his

unwilling body with belly presses is mere youthful nonsense, and only men with the solemn outlook of boys of sixteen will trouble to deceive themselves into the belief that they are on the way to becoming Hercules' and Adonis', by the mere process of flourishing dumb-bells and sizzling through the teeth.

This childish belief has a peculiar relevance for our subject, because there is a tendency in communities which value tidiness, cleanliness and physical efficiency to accept them as a substitute for beauty. Tidiness and cleanliness may be described as distant cousins of beauty which happen to be susceptible of organization. At best they are but pale reflections of beauty herself, but they can be won by effort and submit to those strenuous embraces of modern civilization which beauty as constantly eludes. You can have as much tidiness, cleanliness and health as you please if you are prepared to take enough trouble for them, and, having these things, you will be reasonably content. What is more, you will tend to identify them with the beauty you have

missed. But those who have once known beauty will recognize the fatuity of such an identification. Tidiness and cleanliness may be the distant cousins of beauty, but between them and beauty herself there exists the antipathy which so often separates relations. Thus the creative artist is always untidy and often dirty, while hospitals, which are always clean and always tidy, are never beautiful. The Hampstead Garden Suburb, that apotheosis of business cleanliness, is not so beautiful as Oxford, yet owes such merit as it possesses to the presence of those very qualities which Oxford lacks.

I conclude, therefore, that the preoccupation of America with trim houses, clean streets, efficient drainage, cold baths and chest developers creates an atmosphere which is inimical to the production of works of beauty. I conclude further that the interest shown in these things is the interest of the immature mind, and that the Americans are consequently hopelessly unæsthetic in the same way and for the same reason as schoolboys are hopelessly

unæsthetic. The typical American mind is, in short, a case of arrested development.

PERVERSIONS OF THE ÆSTHETIC SENSE

It must not, however, be supposed that, because beauty is submerged in America, there is no recognition of spiritual values and no response to æsthetic appeals. Because the æsthetic side of the American's nature is thrust into a water-tight compartment and kept there under lock and key, we must not suppose that he is without one. The life of the spirit is strictly confined lest it interfere with the pursuit of material success, but it exists nevertheless. Not only does it exist, but it revenges itself by breaking out from time to time violently and unexpectedly, and demanding sudden, crude and startling satisfactions.

These outcroppings of a suppressed sense of beauty and a thwarted spiritual life express themselves on the æsthetic side in vulgarity, luxury and a love of ostentation and display, and, on the moral side, in childish idealisms

and religious extravagances, which the more cynical European is inclined to dismiss too lightly as mere hypocrisy. There is much certainly in the moral and religious life of the American to suggest this interpretation. Not only does his idealism place him under the necessity of believing that whatever he does is prompted by the best possible motives, but it makes him in consequence ashamed both of his reason and of his passions. He is ashamed of his passions because he considers that the actions to which they prompt him are bad, and he is ashamed of his reason because it compels him to recognize the existence of his passions. The result of this ashamedness is American Puritanism, to which I shall return in the last part of this book; I only mention it here because, when taken in conjunction with the luxury, vulgarity and ostentation with which I am now concerned, it provides the basis for the charge of hypocrisy which is so often levelled against Americans. But Puritanism in the moral sphere, and vulgarity and luxury in the æsthetic, are far from being an-

tagonistic growths. On the contrary, they both spring from the same fundamental cause, namely, the stifling of the spirit by a preoccupation with material success. Throughout the rest of this part I shall be concerned with perversions of the æsthetic sense.

Modes and Manners

Let us begin with some of the more obvious. They should not detain us long. The newly and indecently rich, seeking splendour and beauty, have in all ages succeeded only in achieving vulgarity. This, then, is not a development peculiar to America. It is mentioned here for two reasons. In the first place, the newly-rich of other nations have tired of their vulgarities, so that with each succeeding generation the level of taste has tended slowly to rise. In America alone, with the possible exception of ancient Rome, it seems that no offence against beauty, however extravagant, brings satiety. In the second place the mere fact that America is richer, more powerful,

more civilized and more seemingly uniform than any great nation of the past, enables her inhabitants to devote a hitherto unparalleled ingenuity and resource to the gratification of tastes which are at once jaded and undeveloped.

We will first consider perversions of the æsthetic sense in the sphere of manners, dress and deportment. This is pre-eminently the sphere of the body, in which, as might be expected, the women are to the fore. A few examples must suffice.

There are absurdities of dress. Thus under the heading "Musical Millinery," we are shown the portrait of a woman carrying in her hat a cage containing a live canary. " 'Carry your own orchestra with you' seems to be the idea conveyed in the new 'canary hat,' which is said to be a 'popular new millinery fad in New York,' " says the letterpress. The Americans are, of course, a musical people.

There are grotesque fashions in pets—"In the United States," we are told, "the goldfish is coming into favour as an ideal city pet,

quiet and companionable." The life of the goldfish is no doubt admired because of its lack of privacy—and in furniture, as witness the following:

"Pet 'Animal' Bottles for the Dressing Table

"The latest fashionable novelty for the dressing table is causing crowds to collect in front of a perfumer's shop in Bond Street. It is a scent-bottle made of glass blown so finely, that it resembles a delicate bubble and is shaped like a dog or fox.

"The fashion has come from America, where, it is stated, thousands have been sold. It is considered a social necessity in America to have a life-like model of the family pet upon the dressing-table. Models are to be obtained of every kind of dog from the toy Pomeranian to the large St. Bernard, or of any shape from the squat dachshund to the graceful greyhound. Men are buying these bottles of perfume almost as much as women."

There are absurd experiments in art, a

searching for new media, a mania for eccentricity. Sometimes these are funny, sometimes brutal. The following succeeds in being both:

"BUTTERFLY WING 'PAINTINGS'
"New Art Born of a Nightmare

"A fearsome dream following a lobster supper revealed a new career to Mr. ——, the artist, who employs butterfly wings instead of paints.

"'I am rather subject to nightmare,' he confided to the —'s representative yesterday, 'and one night after a lobster supper I dreamt that I pulled the scales off a large fish and replaced them with butterfly wings. The next morning I drew a fish and 'painted' it with pieces of butterfly wing. I sent it to town and sold it for five guineas.

"'Since then I have devoted all my time to this new *art.*'

"Mr. —— is now turning his attention to butterfly wing photographs, and has already

achieved much success with photographs of children and dancers. He does many reproductions of paintings of old masters.

"Mr. —— has used 70,000 little blue wings since March, and a total of 120,000 wings since August last year."

Some of us who are reactionary in matters of art, and therefore impervious to new experiments, think that the proper place for a butterfly's wings is on the butterfly. It is probable that the butterflies share this opinion.

But pictures are, after all, only copies of reality, and the Americans, with their usual directness, have found a way of going straight to nature to get their artistic effects. They have learned to make the body itself register the tastes of its owner. The following, for example, shows how American maidens record their love for stars.

Beneath a picture of girls reclining on the sand in bathing dresses in the backs of which are cut a series of apertures in the shape of letters, we read the following:

"Sun and Sentiment on White Skins

"Girls in California make a stencil of the name of their favourite film star (Marion Davies, Lew Cody, Mary, Doug, and Bull Montana), and then allow the sun to write the name of the favourite one in letters of gold and tan on their white skins."

Turning now to the manners of Americans, it is not necessary to cite instances in a book written for English readers. There are numerous Americans in this country, most of them drawn from the richest classes. My readers will have met them. In particular those who have had the misfortune to sit next to Americans at a play or concert, and have suffered under their genius for commenting loudly and obviously upon the obvious, will be only to ready to supply instances for themselves. I mention, however, the case of the American lady who, taxed with coming in late at a London theatre, making her way to a seat in the middle of the stalls and disturbing the rest of

the audience, boasted that she had never yet seen the first act of a play, because I understand that it is characteristic of the habits of New York theatre-goers. Nor must we minimize the importance of such opportunities; even the late comer at church is at a disadvantage compared with the late comer in the stalls: the former can only display her dress; the latter can exhibit her shoulders.

Spiritual Exuberances

Let us turn to a sphere which every American will at once recognize as more important, the sphere of the spirit. Strange and fearsome to the European are the vagaries of the American spirit in quest of enlightenment and refreshment.

Their works of scholarship are tolerable enough. Dull they may be and uninspired, traversing with flat-footed thoroughness every inch of the mental territory which their authors have mapped out, and squeezing with an instinct akin to genius the last drop out of the

commonplace, yet dignified withal and of a solidity calculated to win reputations, if not readers. Certainly there are scholars in America, and philosophers, too, who have made original contributions of permanent value to the modern theory of knowledge. But when we pass outside the narrow sphere of philosophical and historical research, we enter a wonderworld of fantastic cults and esoteric religions, revivalist parsons and trombone poets, Great White Masters and ectoplastic mediums, quack doctors and inspired clairvoyants, preying upon a semi-educated and hysterical public of apparently limitless gullibility.

Religions have an unprecedented vogue. As numerous and as varied as the pebbles on the beach, they are cultivated with a virulent and polemical zeal which varies in intensity inversely with the size of their following. Even the Episcopalian Church seems to have lost its "flair" for compromise and is rent with dissensions which in bitterness recall the Middle Ages. The following extract from the report of a newspaper correspondent in America gives

a vivid though necessarily incomplete picture of the state of affairs.

"SECT QUARRELS IN AMERICA
"Growing Bitterness of Controversy

"Politics—American brand—have found a real rival in religion—American brand. It may seem strange to refer to an American brand of religion, but it is evident to any close observer that the average American takes his religion in quite a different fashion from the churchgoer of another country.

"To begin with, there are more religions in the United States than in any other country. There are more than 300 sects by name, but judging from the recent religious controversy there must be almost as many as there are individual clergymen.

"The Episcopalian Church, that is, the branch known as the High Church of England, has been torn asunder by a battle within the ranks of its leaders in the ministry. Half the pastors of New York churches are arrayed

against the bishop and his followers, and one of the most brilliant of them, a man half a century in the ministry, has openly defied the bishop, and challenged him to try him for heresy.

"Pagan Dances

"The Modernist group denies the virgin birth of Christ: the Fundamentalists hold to the old teachings. But the revolt is of wider scope than this. One of the leading Modernist pastors has introduced dancing in his church as a 'symbolic means of impressing the truths of Christianity on his flock.' To an outsider that seems a little difficult to understand; but, there is the fact, and the bishop, openly challenged, seems to lack the means to assert his authority.

"The controversy is becoming more bitter each day, and it would seem that the church is likely to split and two churches arise where but one stood before.

"Baptists at Variance

"The Baptist Church is also torn by dissension, but on different grounds. The modern group in that church has attacked the Bible as unscientific and full of contradictions, and declares that it is not to be taken literally. The old-fashioned ministers hold to their firm belief in every word of it, and denounce particularly the increasing belief in the evolution of man.

"Some of the religious sects are strange beyond belief. There is the 'Pillar of Fire Church,' known as the 'Holy Rollers,' because of their practice of working themselves up to such a pitch of religious frenzy that they roll on the floor; the Seventh Day Adventists, known as the 'High Jumpers,' for a like reason, and other groups which make one wonder at the workings of the human mind. Then there is the 'House of David' clan—not Jewish—and there is also among numerous others a strange sect found in some States and in

Canada, whose members live in communities and never wear so much as a string of beads."

This multiplicity of religions is another factor in American life which recalls the ancient worlds of Rome and Greece in the days of their decadence. The Americans are like the Athenians, too, in their perpetual crying for something new. In the absence of real belief, novelty of creed is desired as a substitute for intensity of conviction, with the result that seekers after the new, whether they be ancient Athenians or modern Americans, are imposed upon by every outworn superstition that masquerades under the guise of a new "ogy" or "ism."

Not less intense is the assiduity with which Americans embark upon the quest of new methods in education. It is common knowledge that nothing is for the young more difficult of achievement than prolonged concentration. Concentration is a wearisome pursuit, which even adults do not practise with complete success, but notable experiments have recently been made in America, as a re-

sult of which it is expected that great advances in the art will soon be within everyone's reach. There is, it appears, an American school at which the curriculum centres on a cow. This cow is not in any way an odd cow; it is not the cow which jumped over the moon, nor has it any peculiarities of shape or habit. The cow is kept in the playground solely for her educational value. She is milked by the students in the morning; they then churn the butter and make the cheese; proceeding next to the study of the history of the cow, they end their day with an hour's observation of the cow meditatively chewing the cud. After directing the whole day's study upon a single object they find that their powers of concentration are considerably increased.

Nothing in recent years has, however, inspired such enthusiasm or achieved such instant success as Freud's Unconscious. We all of us like to believe we are gay dogs at heart, and in proportion to the blamelessness of our lives revel in the extravagances of our hidden

selves. Restrained by convention from what he calls sinning in public, the American can take comfort from the assurance of his tremendous sinfulness in private. If we are to believe the books on psycho-analysis which pour in an unbroken stream from the American printing presses, there is no limit to the activities of the prehistoric caveman lurking in the American's unconscious. Guided by his hairy paw he mislays his bills, puts compromising letters into wrong envelopes, mistakes his appointments with the dentist, and lets his fountain pen leak. If he admires Greek statuary it is because the caveman's fancy detects in the classic features of the Venus of Milo some resemblance to the mother whom (if he is of the male sex) he is naturally anxious to marry. If he disapproves of the policy of President Wilson, it is because the ex-President has many characteristics in common with his father, whom the caveman is equally anxious to kill. And so on. Americans who take mental epidemics of this kind

with a seriousness unknown in Europe, are still on the high tide of this flood of tomfoolery which is happily receding slightly from our shores. Nor is there any evidence that the depths of their credulity in matters appertaining to the alleged disreputability of their unconsciousnesses have yet been plumbed. I have specially mentioned the case of psychoanalysis, not because it is in itself more open to ridicule than other cults, but because its influence is so widespread. It has been so extensively tarred with the enthusiastic brushes of its more eccentric devotees, that it is only with time and difficulty that it will live down the excesses of its early years—and nowhere is the tomfoolery laid on so thickly as in America.

Of other cults I have space only to mention one. I insert it as showing the pathetic faith of Americans in the marvels of medical science, pathetic because of the misplaced devotion it engenders in martyrs to the cause of physical well-being. The following recently appeared in the English papers:

"THE PERFECT LIFE
"20 Men Taking Pills for Two Months

"Two groups of students, each comprising ten men, are now engaged in living the perfect life at the Hahnemann Medical College, Philadelphia.

"For two months the 20 men are to be fed on pills. Some of the pills will be blank and others will contain small but powerful doses of drugs. The taker will be left in ignorance as to whether he has drawn a blank or a prize —at any rate for a time. Each man will keep a diary and record from hour to hour the state of his feelings.

"It is hoped that one of the groups may light on a drug of real therapeutic value, produced from some common herb or basic acid hitherto unutilized. The other hopes to obtain scientific data which will greatly increase the therapeutic value of a recently-discovered remedy."

Nowhere, it would seem, are doctors held in

such esteem as in the United States. They have usurped the authority of the priests. They have made of the body a fetish, and in its service men forget that they have a soul. In the Middle Ages men sacrificed themselves for an article of religious faith, but in the modern world they sacrifice themselves for an article of diet; in the sixteenth century they became martyrs for the sake of Transubstantiation; but it is only in the twentieth that they have become martyrs for the sake of diarrhœa.

Advertisements

Of those two elemental outpourings of the spirit which are most peculiarly American, slang and advertisements, I have little to say. American slang may be expressive, picturesque and effective; it may be a new and entirely original way of conveying meaning, a hitherto undiscovered literary device; it may, for all I know, even be beautiful. But I don't understand it. I make this confession in all frankness and humility, as I think it well for an au-

thor to disavow omniscience at least once in his book. The avowed existence of a phase of his subject with regard to which he is completely ignorant should produce two good results—modesty in the writer and mystery in the reader.

With regard to advertisements the case is a little different. Nobody can avoid a knowledge of American advertisements, since he is never allowed to forget them.

There are two main objections to advertisements. They are false and they are ugly.

As regards their falsehood, it is clear that even the mildest of advertisements, if taken to mean what it says, is saying what is not true. Thus, if we take as a simple case the comparatively innocent advertisement "X.Y.Z., the World-Famous Pianist," it is obvious that there must be many parts of the world where the name of X.Y.Z. is not known. Such parts may be looked for in equatorial Africa and in Greenland; it is probable, moreover, that they would be found, if accurately computed, to embrace the greater portion of what is called

the world. But if X.Y.Z. is not known in these parts, he cannot be famous there. Now the phrase "world-famous," if it means anything, means "famous all over the world." But we have seen that X.Y.Z. is not famous *all* over the world, and is probably not famous even over half of it. Thus the advertisement "X.Y.Z., the World-Famous Pianist," conveys a falsehood. It is difficult to discover any advertisement which does not confine itself to a mere statement of the name of the goods advertised, which does not lie in this way.

A typical case of the lying advertisement is afforded by the use of the phrase "The best," in such advertisements as "X's sauces are the best," or "Y's pants are the best for wear." Not only is the prolific use of the term "best" in itself open to suspicion, seeing that the advertiser, who uses it, being either the maker of the goods or in the pay of the maker, is both judge and jury in the cause of his own production, but when, as so often happens, we find the term "best" claimed for each of two contending sauces, or for each of two simi-

lar articles of wear, a falsehood is clearly lurking somewhere. Now it is just possible that each of the two sauces may be equally good, and that this goodness may be the greatest possible amount of goodness attainable by a sauce, and that in this sense they are both of them best. But it is clear that this is not the sense in which the makers are using the word "best," when they apply it to their own sauces. They do not mean by this word, "Better than everybody else's sauces except one, and occupying in equality with that one the highest possible point of perfection attainable by a sauce," and they do mean, "Better than all other sauces without exception." And when this particular assertion is put forward by two sauce makers simultaneously, each of whom claims this peculiar kind of excellence for his sauce, it is clear that one of them at least is lying. That this is so may be seen by reflecting upon the classic case of the three tailors who set up business in the same street, of whom the first described himself as the "best tailor in the town," the second, as the "best tailor in the

world," and the third, as the "best tailor in the street." The contradiction which is latent in these three announcements can only be resolved on the assumption that certainly two, and probably three of the tailors were lying.

It is only necessary to pay money to tell lies about goods with regard to which one cannot afford to tell the truth, just as it is only necessary to lie about oneself if one has something to conceal. It may be inferred, therefore, that the growth of advertisements has led to a deterioration in the goods advertised. This, of course, is a commonplace conclusion; but it is not usually stated in quite this form. We all know that the industrial era produces goods that are cheap and nasty, and consistently prefer home-made eatables whenever we can get them. What is not so often realized is that the money which is expended in advertising, that is in telling lies about goods that are bad in order to persuade people that they are not bad, might have been spent on making them better. Advertisements, therefore, cause

an increase of what is cheap and nasty and a diminution of solid worth.

To realize the ugliness of advertisements one has only to look out of the window of one's railway carriage when in the neighbourhood of a big town. Advertisements are ugly, partly because commercial men rarely have the sense to employ artists to design them, partly because artists, on the rare occasions when they are employed, have not the sense to design what the commercial men want.

So far I have only given reasons for thinking that *all* advertisements are false and blatant. America is involved for two reasons; first because advertisements are falser, more blatant and more numerous there than they are anywhere else; secondly because America encourages the cult of advertisements as the chief pathway to success.

Such "rousing rockets of boosting triumph" to quote a recent lyrical outburst by an American advertiser as "Our Diamond Dentures are the best! Scrap your Born Teeth—and Buy Diamond Dentures. Can't Ache, Don't

Break," or "Have Baby's Howls Broadcasted. Put Punch and Pep into the Nursery. Buy our Crystal Set and Let Little Peter Yell from Potomac to Paris (Europe)," *sic,* leave the wildest flights of our most imaginative romancers hopelessly outclassed.

Advertisers breed a type of mind that feeds on catchwords. The many live on catchwords and the few live by supplying catchwords to the many. These, as we are assured, by students of American herd psychology, have an influence in moulding and forming the opinion of the people which cannot be exaggerated, so that a good catchword comes to be of more importance than a good cause. The catchwords employed do not strike the lay mind as remarkable either for wit or for originality; the following appears to be typical:

"*Chicago,* Saturday. One of the most important features of American Presidential campaigns is the selection of a catchword or slogan for each candidate.

"After considering hundreds of suggestions, it is believed that the words 'Keep Coolidge'

will be chosen by the backers of the President for renomination. Reuter."

We understand that political success is largely determined by a well-chosen and determined use of catchwords of this type.

As for success in general, it is notorious that in America you can force yourself or your goods on the attention of the public by sheer dint of telling the public with sufficient blatancy and frequency that you are the only person and that yours are the only goods to which they ought to attend. If only you blow your own trumpet loud enough and long enough, others will come to your relief and blow it for you. It is a nasty creed, nor, since the object of successful advertisement is, as we have suggested, successful lying, is it a particularly moral one; yet not only do we give positions of the greatest private reward and public prominence to those who have been most successful in practising it, but we actually allow them to flaunt their criterion of success before aspiring youth and to insist, with all the authority that their social eminence gives them,

that all who desire power, wealth, and authority in the land will obtain them by hoodwinking the public into accepting themselves and their wares at their own valuation.

Examples of this public folly, so egregious that, if I took them from America, where they exhibit their most perfect development, they would not be believed, are sufficiently numerous in all modern countries where men grow rich by selling goods cheap to their fellows. The following from England gives the recipe for success in the manufacture of popular watering-places:

"THE SECRET OF SUCCESS
"Lord Leverhulme's Advice to a Mayor

"When Lord Leverhulme went to Morecambe yesterday to lay the foundation stone of Morecambe Hospital extensions, costing £7,000, he was met by the Mayor in the insignificant-looking Town Hall.

"The Mayor apologized to his lordship for not possessing a palatial building, whereupon

Lord Leverhulme, noticing the advertising department, said: 'Do not trouble about a palatial Town Hall. Your future as a seaside resort depends upon the work done in this advertising room. Just as advertising has built up big businesses, so it can build up busy and flourishing seaside resorts.

" 'Concentrate on telling through the Press your advantages to the wide world and then your big Town Hall will come later.' "

This is the most succinct explanation of the horrors of an English watering-place that has hitherto been offered.

The Reverence for Antiquity

I PROCEED to a more amiable expression of the American spirit, which takes us for the first time within measurable distance of the outer confines of the realm of beauty. This is the passion for antiquity. It is an interesting passion, which manifests itself in many ways.

In the first place it generates the American

tourist. It is natural that people living in a land where everything is new should turn for relief to places where there is still left something of what is old. When the newness aims, as it does in America, at complete uniformity, the desire for relief may well become overpowering. We can understand this desire; it seems to us natural. But why it should lead its votaries to mistake antiquity for beauty is not so clear. After all, a thing is not necessarily beautiful because it is old, although it may be true that most old things are æsthetically superior to most new ones.

Yet we should be the last to regret this mistake. On the contrary, we welcome it, since it enables us to predict the movements of Americans. We always know where they will be. We know, as we know that the earth goes round the sun, that they are at the Cheshire Cheese, gazing at Johnson's chair and reading the inscriptions. What could be simpler? We avoid the Cheshire Cheese. Poor Cheshire Cheese! A sad fate to befall an ancient hos-

telry, thus to be martyred to make an American holiday!

Yet it is because, and only because, of the sacrifices of the Cheshire Cheeses of the land that it is still possible to enjoy the beauty of England without molestation. American tourists, having neither initiative nor imagination but only herd instinct, all go to the same places. These are called "show places." "But are not the show places beautiful," I may be asked, "and do not Americans come to England to enjoy beauty?" "No, they do not come to enjoy beauty; they are concerned only with what is old and celebrated."

"But is not the old sometimes beautiful—that old abbey for instance—and are not the Americans there?" "It may have been once, but its organization as a 'beauty spot,' with refreshments and picture postcards to show that you have been there, has robbed it of whatever beauty it once possessed. As for the old abbey, the Americans are certainly there—can't you hear the noise of their talking?—but you, thank God, are round the corner en-

joying the beauty which your knowledge of their habits has mercifully preserved for you."

If you are inquisitive, of course, and prefer the curious to the beautiful, go to the abbey by all means, and your love of the marvellous will be marvellously rewarded. For the phenomenon of the sight-seeing American is a thing both new and strange, a portent in the annals of human behaviour. The portent is characterized by respectful interest on the surface and by complete indifference at heart. The respectful interest makes the American an easy and lucrative prey to the custodian or caretaker. Who is not familiar with those long queues of tourists following solemnly in the wake of a little old man round the precincts and cloisters of a cathedral? The Americans are at once distinguishable by their constant application to expensively bound guide books and their eager purchase of souvenirs. The old man pours out a constant stream of information consisting mainly of names and dates; he tells them who was buried here, and who dug him up, and why; who carved this piece of

stone, and who defaced it; how many monks sat along this bench in pre-Reformation times, and what they had for dinner; when the north transept was built, and whose ghost is supposed to haunt it; how much was subscribed to the restoration fund last year, and to what extent this year's subscription falls short of it. The Americans subscribe lavishly, leave the old man beaming at his tip, and depart with satisfaction at having kept up the national reputation for interest in beauty, and added one more scalp to their collection.

The respectful interest also accounts for the addiction to guide-books, resulting in an immense accumulation of useless information, and in a great enthusiasm for the exteriors of living antiques, such as the dons of our English Universities. An Oxford friend of mine lecturing in America, on being taken into an American school, was introduced by the master to the assembled boys as follows: "This is Professor ——, of Cambridge, London, England. Take a good look at the Professor, boys. Take a good look at him."

To understand the fundamental indifference of the American to the objects and places he visits on his travels, it is only necessary to engage him in conversation. It will rapidly become apparent that he is visiting the abbey, cathedral, castle or what-not at which you have met him, not because he desires to see it, but because he desires to inform other Americans that he has seen it. It is, accordingly, a point of honour with him to "do" as many of these places in a given time as possible. He collects antiquities like scalps. In the course of a conversation on this subject an American said to me, "They all told me that I could not do Canterbury and Stratford-on-Avon in one day, but I got up early and took an early train and got to Canterbury, and then caught a train to Stratford-on-Avon, and I managed to do both those British features in one day." I asked him if he belonged to some society which held competitions and gave prizes to those who succeeded in doing most features in a given time. He said that he did not, but that the old country wanted waking up. He was very

proud of his performance, one apparently among a number of similar feats. He was proud both of the number of places he had seen, and of the rapidity with which he had seen them. I asked him if his visit to England was limited in duration, and whether he was under the necessity of returning shortly to America. This, however, proved not to be the case. He was staying in Europe indefinitely.

The persistence of this attitude in a man whose holiday was not dependent upon the amount of time he could spare from the pursuit of money-making struck me as the strangest part of the whole business. Here was a regular Henry James American, a man who, having inherited a fortune or detached himself at the right moment from the process of making one, was at liberty, if he so desired, to devote the whole of the rest of his life to globe-trotting. Yet he and his kind seem totally unable to realize that the methods appropriate to seeing the world and the treasures of beauty it contains are in some inscrutable way different from those proper to the conduct of a real

estate business. He has noticed that twenty business transactions may be twenty times as lucrative as one; but, having discovered this truth, he seems quite incapable of learning that there are limits to its application. And when I speak of the fundamental indifference exhibited by Americans for what they see, I am referring to this habit of regarding pictures and statues and churches merely in the light of so many items to be ticked off on a programme. Valuable, in that they offer raw material for snapshots and make glorious the return of the traveller to the States, for themselves they are valued not at all.

There is a famous *Punch* picture of two Americans inspecting St. Mark's, Venice. The first asks the second, "What is the name of this place?" The second is distressed to find that he cannot remember whether it is Florence or Venice. "Say, boy," asks the first, "what day of the week is it?" "Tuesday," answers the second. "Then it must be Venice," replies the first, and that this is not a caricature, but a typical representation of a normal

attitude, the experience of those who have had the misfortune to go on officially-arranged and personally-conducted tours in the company of Americans will bear witness.

Corroboratory evidence may be found in the fact that those Americans who stay at home and are unable, therefore, to invoke famous names and places as witnesses to the extent of their travels, betray an almost incredible ignorance both of the better-known antiques and of their history. The Oxford friend to whom I referred above was asked by an American schoolmaster, who had founded Oxford? My friend replied that there was a legend to the effect that it had been founded by Alfred the Great. "Alexander the Great," replied the schoolmaster. "That must be some ancient!"

The Acquisition of Antiques

The most popular of all the outlets for the submerged æstheticism of Americans is connoisseurship. Americans are great buyers and great collectors, and, since they are neces-

sarily distrustful of all that is new in art (except when it has achieved an established reputation, by which time it is no longer new) they purchase almost exclusively old masterpieces. The acquisition of masterpieces brings a double satisfaction; it satisfies the possessive instinct and the passion for antiquity.

The collector's instinct does not concern itself with the intrinsic beauty or interest of the objects collected. He does not buy what pleases or moves him; the æsthetic value of a work of art is not his concern. He is inspired solely by the passion to possess, and to possess what will fetch a good price. Hence the first question the American asks is not "Is it beautiful?" but "Is it rare?" We thus arrive at a new definition of æsthetic value. Good art is art that costs money to buy, and art costs money only when there is a limited supply. Hence the works of living artists, whatever their intrinsic value, are not esteemed, since they are readily obtainable and liable to increase in number. A less pernicious variant of the collector's question "Is it rare?", though

one equally fatal to æsthetic appreciation is "Is it old?" The importance of this question to collectors generates the expert and the archæologist, both of whom flourish in America. Who made a work of art? When and where was it made? Is it all the work of one hand? Who bought it? Through what collections has it passed? These and a thousand other irrelevances are the matters that concern the American art expert. The question of the æsthetic significance of the work is the one question that is never asked in this twilight realm of beauty's perversion. Thus we hear that "Sir Joseph Duveen, the London art dealer, has sold Frans Hals' picture 'The Laughing Mandolin Player,' for £50,000 to Mr. J. R. Thompson, proprietor at Chicago of a chain of multiple groceries stores. The buyer has already a famous collection.

"The picture once belonged to Count Ronda at Stockholm, and was in the famous collection of Capello at Amsterdam until 1767."

It is difficult when listening to the comments of the American art collector on his treasures

not to be reminded of the schoolboy philatelists, who rhapsodize over "three-cornered Capes" or "black Mauritius twopennies."

In the world of books Americans are great collectors of first editions. It is not to be supposed that they read them. It may be doubted indeed whether their interest in the contents of the first editions they so sedulously cultivate is greater than that of their printers and binders, from which, indeed, it differs but little. What attracts them is rarity coupled with the ability to fetch good prices.

A peculiar form of connoisseurship in books consists in specialization in the works of a particular author. Some Americans insist, as a matter of collector's pride, on having a complete set of all the editions, from the earliest to the latest, that have been published of the works of the chosen author. Hence a number of small publishing houses in England largely maintain their existence by bringing out very precious and grossly expensive editions of seventeenth or eighteenth-century writers, in the knowledge that there will always be a cer-

tain minimum of American buyers constrained to purchase entire sets without regard to price by the necessity of having their author complete.

The above are instances of the methods by means of which a thwarted æsthetic sense endeavours to find satisfaction. Americans are not by nature different from other men. Like their fellows, they possess an impulse to seek for beauty and to love her when they have found her. It is this impulse which, driven underground by the conditions of modern American life, wells upwards through strange and unwonted channels, and issues finally in the uncouth cults and pursuits of which instances have been given. It is not to be supposed that these cults afford permanent satisfaction to their pathetic votaries. The substitutes, which thwarted impulses are compelled to find for the natural outlets which circumstances forbid them, rarely bring satisfaction. They grow wearisome, are quickly exhausted, and bring to those who seek them tired and listless lives. Hence arises the restlessness of the modern

well-to-do American, who, seeking perpetually for an enduring satisfaction that he never finds, becomes a slave to that hardest of human taskmasters, his need for distraction and amusement. In this respect he is the victim of his civilization, which, by placing a premium upon a way of life which is inimical to beauty, condemns its members to spiritual wretchedness for want of her.

Part Three: Goodness

GOODNESS

AMERICA AND MORALS

Hypocrisy and the Desire for Beliefs

In the sphere of morals it is usually held that Americans are prone to hypocrisy. The word is, however, a misnomer. Hypocrites are people who deliberately profess beliefs which are at variance with the views they really hold; their hypocrisy is detected when it is seen that their actions are inconsistent with these beliefs. Since the actions performed are always less respectable than the beliefs professed, we may say that conscious hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue. Thus conscious hypocrisy involves a double discrepancy; first, between beliefs held and beliefs professed, and, secondly, between beliefs professed and actions performed.

Now in the case of the American this double deception is lacking; there is a discrepancy

between his beliefs and his actions, but there is none between the beliefs he professes and those which he holds. He really thinks he believes what he says he believes, and it is not hypocrisy but stupidity which blinds him to the fact that his actions proceed from an entirely different set of beliefs. Americans, more than most men, desire to believe things for the sake of believing them. They have, that is to say, a definite desire for beliefs. It follows that their beliefs are more numerous than the average non-American's; they are also more creditable in the sense that they are such as men would wish to have, and not such as are true. This elaborate equipment of high-minded beliefs leads, in the case of the American, to a greater divergence between beliefs and actions than is customary, since, while acting much like anybody else, he believes that he acts much better. It is this divergence which gives rise to the view that Americans are hypocrites; but since they do not know that their beliefs have no relation to their actions, it is themselves rather than others that they deceive.

I propose to examine a few of the most important of the beliefs which Americans desire to entertain and, in spite of the evidence to the contrary, succeed in entertaining.

With the exuberant optimism of the young they think that the world is a good place and that it will become better; they also wish their welfare to be a matter of great concern to an immensely important person called God, whom they conceive as a good and very powerful American. When, as happens from time to time, events occur which suggest that the world is not a good place, or that God is unaccountably neglecting his chief duty of looking after Americans, they substitute for the desired fact a belief that the desired fact exists. This, of course, is a fairly common human characteristic. Men in all ages, finding that reality has failed to conform to their expectations, have taken refuge in beliefs. Thus those who wish to be famous but are not, substitute for the desire for fame a desire for the belief in their fame. The desired belief is

easier to command than the fame which is the object of the belief, with the result that the majority of men who fail to realize their desires in fact, find consolation by realizing them in belief. Hence spring vanity or the belief that we are beautiful, pride or the belief that we are powerful, morality or the belief that we are good, and optimism or the belief that God is good.

In general we may say that beliefs in the existence of what we desire tend to spring up when what we desire is non-existent. Such beliefs uniformly give pleasure and are accordingly strongly held. For this reason those who seek to remove them arouse as much resentment as those who diminish the sum total of things that give pleasure. Since, moreover, the reason for holding the belief is not the existence of the fact which the belief asserts, but the desire to substitute the belief for the non-existence of the fact, we may say that all strongly held beliefs are untrue. When beliefs are true, as for example the belief that

two and two make four, there is no need to hold them strongly. Hence we persecute men who try to shake our belief in the goodness of God or of ourselves, but nobody feels any animosity against the man who thinks that two and two make five.

The beliefs in the goodness of God and of Americans are particularly strong in America. As a consequence, facts which contradict them are ignored, and those who draw attention to these facts are persecuted.

I propose to consider first the American belief that God is good, and secondly the American belief that Americans are good and will become better. I do not hold that these beliefs are false, but I do not think that they are necessarily true. They are usually regarded as true only because the desire for these beliefs causes the evidence against them to be overlooked. I shall consider the nature of this evidence after discussing the beliefs, and shall describe the efforts which are made to prevent it from obtaining a hearing.

I. OPTIMISM OR THE BELIEF THAT GOD IS GOOD AND THAT ALL IS THEREFORE WELL WITH THE WORLD

It is commonly supposed that the world was created by a God who is both all-powerful and all-good. It is further supposed that He permits to us a measure of Free Will in order that we may mould our destinies by our actions, and that He suffers pain and evil to exist in order that our natures may be disciplined by suffering, and that we may learn to avoid what is bad. It is usually held that pain and evil will disappear when our natures have been sufficiently perfected by suffering to make us fit to enter the celestial world, although, should we fail in the test, we shall be doomed to suffer pain and to perform evil eternally. In spite of this latter belief it is also held that pain and evil are unreal in some sense in which happiness and goodness are real. The reason for this is that it is not thought to be compatible with the goodness of God that He should create pain and evil which possess any reality

other than that of mere seeming; they are, in fact, illusions born of our finite and partial understandings, the understanding by means of which we realize this truth being, presumably, neither partial nor finite.

The evidence for this view of the Universe is mainly derived from two sources: (1) the nature of man's moral and religious self with all that it implies; and (2) the appearance of benevolent design in the Universe, an appearance which the facts of evolution are thought to substantiate. This evidence is sufficiently familiar; in fact, the livelihood of numbers of persons depends on their constant reaffirmation of it, and I do not propose to dilate upon it.

The chief objections to this view are: (1) It requires us to suppose that God is either deliberately wicked or wantonly deceitful.

Either pain and evil are real, or they are not. If they are real, then God, being all-powerful and all-creative, must have created them when He need not have done so. But the deliberate creation of pain and evil is held to be wicked.

Therefore, if God is all-powerful, He cannot be benevolent.

If pain and evil are unreal, then God has deceived us by making us think of them as real. There is no doubt that we think we suffer. Why this deception? Deception springs from limitation. An all-powerful being has no need to deceive. Therefore, if God is benevolent He cannot be all-powerful.

(2) It destroys Free Will while appearing to affirm it. If God is all-powerful, He must be omniscient. We are, in fact, specifically asked to believe that He is omniscient. Being omniscient, He must be aware in advance of everything that is going to happen. Since He cannot make mistakes, everything which He knows to be going to happen must, in fact, happen; therefore, the future is determined; therefore, Free Will is an illusion.

The Uses of God

In spite of these objections, the belief in an omnipotent and benevolent God is very

popular. It fulfils a deep-seated human need. "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to create Him." Therefore man does create Him, and he creates Him in his image according to his desires. He creates Him to be immensely powerful, very jealous and very watchful. He is assumed to take the same view of the rights and wrongs of any quarrel, individual or national, as His creator, and pledged to see that right, that is to say, His creator's interests, will triumph in the end. Incidentally He is useful for the purpose of sanctioning our pleasures and quietening our consciences. Even the best of us must have our amusements—golf for instance—but, being moral and moderate people, Americans for choice, we feel qualms about unlimited indulgence in them, which must be allayed. Consciences will be consciences even with the best of us, and some means must be found of keeping them quiet. What easier way out of the difficulty than to persuade ourselves that God shares our tastes and bestows His blessing on our pleasures, so that, by merely doing

what we want to do, we are actually spiritualizing our natures and approaching nearer to Him? And this, in America, is exactly what we do do. Thus, take the following from the daily paper:

"The Golf Rhapsodist

"Hard upon the appointment of a chaplain to an American gold club comes the report of a long and beautiful sermon by a Californian clergyman on the spirituality of golf. There are in this noble game, it appears, moments which induce excess of emotion that no tongue can describe—'a sense of harmony, ecstatic joy and peace, a sensation of an overwhelming love and well-being.' After this we may feel that there is not one of our pleasures, however humble, of which God may not approve."

Jesus as a Business Man

Useful in sanctioning our pleasures, God performs an even more valuable service in

blessing our businesses. He has, it seems, gone out of His way to express His approval of the methods of American business men and especially of advertising, American business men, by sending His Son into the world—a little prematurely perhaps, but none the less deliberately—to embody this ideal type for the future edification of mankind. This I take to be the lesson of a celebrated work, *The Man Nobody Knows,* a business man's life of Jesus, which was the great literary success of New York in the fall of 1925. It is written by a Babbitt for Babbitts, and its object is to prove that Jesus was a Babbitt, too.

Mr. Bruce Barton, the author, is the head of an advertising business in the East. "Advertising is the oldest force in the world," he says, and both Jesus and His Father were, it seems, advertising geniuses.

"The first four words ever uttered, *'Let there be light,'* constitutes its (*i.e.,* advertising's) 'charter.' The first and greatest electric sign was the evening stars."

As the son of a minister, Mr. Barton was

very much dissatisfied with orthodox views of the Gospel.

"Some day," he said, "someone will write a book about Jesus. Every business man will read it and send it to his partners and his salesmen, for it will tell the story of the founder of modern business."

Mr. Barton has had to write the book himself, and he bases it on the text *"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business,"* with the word "business" underlined every time to leave no doubt as to what it means.

Jesus, says Mr. Barton, believed in giving generous measure: therefore he had the same principles as the partners of J. P. Morgan and Company, who have lights on in their offices long after all the staff has left.

This point of view is summed up in the pregnant remark: "The partners travel the second mile; that is why they are partners."

Before Jesus as an advertiser Mr. Barton becomes humble. "Four page-one stories in one day!" he cries, as he contemplates some of the incidents of the Gospels.

He writes some headings for the *Capernaum News*:

PROMINENT TAX COLLECTOR JOINS
NAZARETH FORCES.
MATTHEW ABANDONS BUSINESS TO
PROMOTE NEW CULT.
GIVES LARGE LUNCHEON.

The chief modern expression of the Jesus spirit is, it seems, the newspaper. Jesus was the man who spoke at the street corner, the newspaper being the modern street corner. Even Mr. Hearst has the same method as Jesus, the method of the "human touch." He has a rule that none of his "yellow" journals shall print a photograph without a human being in it, and he is successful.

"Every advertising man," says Mr. Barton, "ought to study the parables of Jesus and learn the four big elements in their power. First, they are marvellously

condensed, as all good advertising must be. . . ."

The business philosophy of Jesus, in turn, is summed up in this "marvellously condensed" way:

> "Whoever will be great must render great service. Whoever will find himself at the top must be willing to lose himself at the bottom. The big rewards comes to those who travel the second undemanded mile."

Those who may be inclined to smile a little are warned that "Judas would have sneered at all this."

"He (Judas) had the virtues and the weaknesses of the small-bore business man. He was hard-boiled and proud of it."

Mr. Barton is not "hard-boiled"; but he has the typical sentimentalism of the hard-boiled, and talks prettily of the little boy who mixed up Mary's little lamb with the "Lamb of God."

That such a book should be solemnly and religiously written and solemnly and religiously read is a portent. If oxen had a religion, said Aristotle, they would conceive of God as a glorified ox!

The Value of Religion to the Poor

Valuable, however, as are His services in this world, God's chief rôle is played in the next. His function there is to redress any apparent injustices in this world, by rewarding His creators for their unrequited merits, and taking a horrible revenge upon their enemies. This conception of the Almighty affords peculiar consolation to persons who are in distress; it leads them to think that their sufferings are temporary, and that the happiness of persons more favoured than themselves is equally temporary. Hence religion has always been popular among the poor, and its popularity has been deliberately cultivated by the rich. God is cheaper than a living wage, and handsome

subscriptions to church funds, besides having a beneficial effect upon the conscience, ensure the dissemination of beliefs tending to quiet and therefore profitable behaviour among the working classes in this world, in the expectation of having everything put right in the next.[1] Thus the belief in an all-powerful, all-good God has a twofold attraction. It pleases the rich man, because it is a projection of his desire to insure against discomfort from his conscience in the present and possible discomfort at the hands of the Almighty hereafter; insurance is always popular, and in this case has the merit of being cheap as well. It pleases the poor man, because it invests his life with significance, enabling him to think himself important by the simple device of in-

[1] Compare Napoleon's remarks on the uses of religion: "What is it that makes the poor man think it quite natural that there are fires in my palace while he is dying of cold, that I have ten coats in my wardrobe while he goes naked, that at each of my meals enough is served to feed his family for a week? It is simply religion, which tells him that in another life I shall be only his equal, and that he actually has more chance of being happy there than I. Yes, we must see to it that the floors of the churches are open to all, and that it does not cost the poor man much to have prayers said at his tomb."

venting someone of importance to whom he matters.

Hence the omnipotent, benevolent God is popular with all parties, perhaps because all parties fashion Him to suit their needs.

Contrary Views

(1) *The Mechanistic Universe*

Yet in every age men have been found unwilling to subscribe to this belief. The reason they alleged for this unwillingness was that the belief did not square with the evidence. This has appeared to their contemporaries such an inadequate reason for refusing to adopt this or any other belief, that they have usually persecuted and in extreme cases tortured these intransigents into a better frame of mind.

The views to which the evidence predisposed the sceptics [1] were of two kinds. First, there was the conception of a purely mechanis-

[1] The word sceptic is used in its limited modern sense, of a person who does not believe that the world was created by an omnipotent, benevolent God.

tic universe. Once upon a time the universe had been, so to speak, wound up like a gigantic clock, and, like a clock, it would continue to function automatically through the mere interaction of its parts until it ran down. In a universe so conceived mind, instead of being a directing purposive force, was an incidental and unimportant product of matter, which in one of the permutations of its infinite combinations had managed to achieve consciousness of itself. Thus life was an incidental throw up, a mere eddy in the primæval slime, an alien passenger through a fundamentally hostile environment, destined one day to finish its pointless journey with as little noise and significance as had attended its beginning.

If there was any form of spirit or immaterial force behind this mechanical world, it was a spirit entirely remote from and indifferent to human affairs. Like Mr. Hardy's god, it would thwart man's efforts without malignity and further them without design.

The evidence for this conception of the Universe was largely provided by the scientific dis-

coveries of the nineteenth century. Biology and geology, astronomy and physics, all combined to belittle the importance of human life, and the insignificance of the planet on which alone it was known to exist, so that consciousness came to be represented as a tiny glow in the vast immensities of geological time and astronomical space.

(ii) *God as a Practical Joker*

The other view finds perhaps its best expression in Goethe's *Faust*. We are here introduced to God as a malignant practical joker, creating the world for his amusement and occupying his time in deriving entertainment from the spectacle of its anomalies. His chief diversion is the behaviour of man. Man has been deliberately made ludicrous. He is the great butt of the universe, and his absurdity shows itself chiefly in this, that the greater his cause for complaint, the greater his display of gratitude. When his Maker afflicts him, he praises Him; when He visits him with misfortune, he persuades himself that it is all

being done for his own good; when troubles continue to heap themselves upon him, he prays to their author in unabated confidence for their removal. The more he suffers from earthly things the more he turns to heavenly things; the more he is humbled before man, the more does he exalt himself before God; the less cause he has to be grateful, the more does he sweat with thanks. In short, let things be as bad as they may, he will never fail in praises to God that they are no worse.

"What a conceited ass!" thinks the Almighty. "Whatever I do, he thinks it is all for his benefit. The more I hurt him, the more pride he takes in it. And how he does love me! Lord! What a joke! Surely the best in the world!"

The evidence for this view is sufficiently abundant. Design, we say, is to be detected in the workings of nature; yes, but what kind of design?

Let us take an example at random. Malaria is a beastly disease from which men die in a disgusting manner. It is also very infectious.

How does Nature take steps to ensure that it shall infect as many people as possible? Her arrangements are certainly ingenious. They have recently been discovered by Sir Ronald Ross. The following is an extract from an account of his discovery. "There are hundreds of kinds of mosquitoes. Some species do not carry infection at all. Those which do so imbibe from the blood of human beings spores of crescent shape. These immediately begin to change their form. From those which are male infinitesimal threads break out. They enter and fertilize the female cells, which then pierce through the skin of the mosquito's stomach. Their contents disperse into the insect's blood, are conveyed by a gland, unknown till Ross discovered it, into the mosquito's proboscis, and with its bite are injected into the human blood, to complete the vicious circle."

At every point in this wonderful series there were a hundred ways of going wrong, and nothing in the nature of a signpost to suggest the almost diabolical ingenuity with which Na-

ture ensured the persistence of the malaria parasite. It took four years' work before Ross could wrench from Nature her wretched secret.

Is this the design of a good God? Is it even the work of a gentleman?

Now let us glance at the animal world. Mr. W. H. Hudson, the famous naturalist, tells us of certain wasps, the Ichneumonidæ, who sting their caterpillar prey in such a way as to paralyse their movements without killing them. The next step is to lay eggs in the body of the caterpillar, whose warmth in due course hatches out the young larvæ. These immediately begin to feed on their environment, that is on the paralysed body of the caterpillar. Thus the forethought of the parents provides the larvæ with an abundant supply of live meat. Very nice for the larvæ! But one feels that from the point of view of the caterpillar the matter might have been arranged differently. Still, it is a good joke to make a dinner off your incubator.

We hear, too, of slave-making ants, and may even have noticed the young cuckoo ejecting its foster brothers from the nest. And are there not birds endowed with the instinct to build a nest which is always too small for the number of eggs they lay, so that one or more of the young birds is cast out to die on the ground?

Instinct, that special endowment from the Creator to enable animals to take care of themselves, is, indeed, at best a fallacious guide. Of innumerable instances that might be given, the following quotation from W. H. Hudson on the instincts of pigeons will serve as well as any.

"The falcon's custom was, after dozing a few hours in the willow, to fly up and circle high in the air above the buildings, whereupon the pigeons, losing their heads in their turn, would rush up in a cloud to escape their deadly enemy. This was exactly what the enemy wanted them to do, and no sooner would they rise to the proper height than he would make

his swoop and singling out his victim, strike it down with a blow of his lacerating claws."

So, too, the deceived wife is moved by her instinct of jealousy to make herself doubly offensive to her husband by upbraiding him for his unfaithfulness and denouncing his lady as a trollop. Another good joke, surely, to give us instincts which defeat the ends we wish them to serve and serve the ends of those we wish to defeat.

The divine humour seems in fact to be of a piece throughout. It revels in the principle of opposites. Where God's hand falls heaviest, there are His praises loudest; where He has provided the instinct which destroys, we discover only the "instinct of self-preservation." On the same principle we may expect that where the belief in His solemnity is most intense, there too will His jokes be most ironical, which brings us back to America. America, at all times rich in examples of the Almighty's humour, has recently provided us with two divine jokes of the first water. The

following extracts are from the morning paper:

(1) *"POISON WINE.*

"Varnish Stain Drunk in Error at Communion Service.

"New York, Monday.

"An extraordinary poisoning affair is reported to-day from Grand Rapids, Michigan, the victims being ten elders of the *Seventh Reformed Church.* All ten are in a serious condition, and it is feared that two of them may die. The poison has been traced to 'wine' used at a Communion Service yesterday, which proves on examination not to have been wine at all, but turpentine varnish stain.

("A *Central News* telegram states that the liquid had been left behind by some painters, and was used by mistake.")

It would almost seem as if we have here an attempt to discredit the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Or does this doctrine not apply in the Seventh Reformed Church?

(2) "At San Juan in the province of Cosoomatepec during an earthquake, the collapse of a church steeple, which fell on the crowds of refugees who were praying inside the building, caused many casualties."

Such diversions as the above accord well enough with this conception of the Almighty. If God is an invisible showman who pulls the strings by which His puppets are twitched into love and war, it would be delicious irony to hear them insisting on their complete freedom of will. If He tortures them for His amusement, it would be diverting to receive their gratitude for torments received, and if from time to time He carelessly leaves about the Universe traces of His real nature and His real design, how amusing if the puppets tumbled over themselves in their eagerness to cover them up, devoted all their ingenuity to proving that they were not there, and violently abused and persecuted those who drew attention to them. Which again brings us back to America.

Efforts to Suppress Contrary Views

Americans are adepts at covering up. They are particularly anxious that nothing should be allowed to disturb their belief in the goodness and omnipotence of God.

Take, for example, biology. Biology throws suspicion on the first book of Genesis; it makes it appear probable that mankind evolved by a series of "sports" or mutations from a primordial stock of which the apes are divergent developments. Man and the ape, therefore, belong to the same family of mammalia, and this family must itself be regarded as only one among the successors of the Mesozoic age, when the earth nourished reptiles, and vertebrates were unknown. It follows that man's remotest ancestor must be looked for in some protoplasmic amœba. This is bad enough, but worse is to come. Biologists had indicated the process by which man had developed from the amœba; but philosophers refused to regard the process as neces-

sarily a progress, and, indeed, as Mr. Russell has remarked, until we can obtain the amœba's views on the question we must suspend our judgment. Where, moreover, does God come in? Biology, it seems, after the initial kick-off, gets along very well without Him.

All this is very inconvenient for the omnipotent-God belief; the omnipotent God can of course be made to square with it—with a sufficient exercise of ingenuity He can be made to square with anything—but the process subjects Him to strain. Hence certain States, such as Alabama and Tennessee, have forbidden the teaching of evolution in the State Schools.

The Monkey Trial

The trial of Mr. Scopes at Dayton (known as Monkeyville) for teaching that men are descended from monkeys, was one of the great events of the summer of 1925. For the space of a fortnight this little town became the most famous spot in America, and the civilization

which had made it its centre became the laughingstock of the world.

Even before the famous anti-evolution laws had been passed, symptoms of the mediæval intolerance which characterizes America in religious matters had not been wanting. Thus we are told that a certain

> "Professor Jesse Sprowls, now teaching at a college in Annapolis, reveals the fact that he and six colleagues were dropped from the staff of the University of Tennessee before the law was passed, because they refused to give up their scientific views.
>
> "Religious bitterness had been inflamed to a striking pitch. Rotary and Kiwanis clubs passed resolutions asking for protection against 'German infidels,' and Billy Sunday, the eccentric revivalist who emerges from his spacious ranch from time to time, came out and staged a display in which he fought on the stage an opponent dressed up as a red devil."

The author of the law, which Mr. Scopes was accused of transgressing, was an old tobacco farmer, who, it appears, wrote out the "anti-monkey law" with his own hand while a member of the State legislature. The reasons for this remarkable piece of legislation were the tobacco farmer's belief in the Bible "just like it is printed," and his fears that the doctrine of evolution might lower the public standard of morality. Being unable to afford the railway fare to Dayton, he announced [1] that during the trial he would stay at home and pray.

> "He never saw a train till he was 19. His school-days only totalled 18 months. He knew nothing about evolution except by hearsay, but had now started to read a little book about it."

Subsequently his fare was paid by the Universal Service News Agency, who hired him

[1] I am quoting from the Press reports of the trial.

to write descriptive paragraphs of the trial for the papers.

The law so conceived was to be interpreted by a jury of farmers, some of whom could scarcely read, while those who could had mostly confined their studies to the Bible and the daily paper. These men solemnly took it upon themselves to decide the issues which had distracted men like Huxley and Gladstone. The counsel for the prosecution, W. J. Bryan, a perfectly sincere and vainglorious fool, was the most outstanding figure in the case. The thing meant money for him, since, apart from the fact that he had been heavily feed by an agency to speak against evolution, audiences clamoured wherever he went to be allowed to pay him to express his views on the burning topic. He had even experienced trouble through the refusal of audiences to hear him on any subject other than monkeys, such as the advantages of land purchase in Florida, on which he had also been feed to speak.

To give even in outline the speeches of this great man would take me too far beyond the

scope of this book. They may be read in the records of American oratory. The following extract will, however, serve to indicate his spirit.

> "As Mr. Bryan was leaving the Court a New York reporter stopped him and asked if he believed that Joshua made the sun stand still; Mr. Bryan thereupon reddened and angrily replied, 'I'm tired of being insulted by asses. Don't do it again.'"

The character of the trial itself is shown by the following incidents, extracted at random from newspaper reports:

> "As the Court was about to be opened with prayer . . . this morning, the defence objected to the Judge allowing argumentative prayers.
>
> "Judge Raulston replied that he had always taken advantage of the presence of a minister to invoke Divine guidance while

on the bench. It was a reasonable procedure, and he overruled the objection.

"The minister, in shirt and trousers, then offered a short prayer.

"The judge announced a 15-minutes' delay for the benefit of the photographers, who have been allowed a score at a time to overrun the Court, and even to stand between judge and counsel.

"At the end of 15 minutes it was immediately announced that there would be an adjournment for the rest of the morning to consider legal points. . . . Mr. Clarence Darrow, counsel for the defence, made the most advanced speech heard in Tennessee for many years.

"In spite of his first name, Mr. Darrow is a weary old man, and looks like a farmer in braces and shirt-sleeves half torn off.

"Mr. W. J. Bryan, chief counsel for the prosecution, then opened his enormous mouth and said, for publication, 'These are the most unintelligent bunch of bigoted idiots I ever saw.'"

The attitude of the local American public will be inferred from the following:

> "Dayton is continuing the preparations for the trial—placing guards over the water supply, improving the sanitation, installing broadcasting apparatus and preparing various souvenirs in the form of monkey-men medals.
>
> "Two monkeys have arrived in the town. The hospitality committee, in an excess of zeal, arranged for one of the two to stay at the same house as Mr. Scopes, but the arrangement was altered. This is regarded as Modernist propaganda.
>
> "Strong objections have been raised to a film of the Life of Christ at the local cinema, because the Saviour is shown as being sprinkled and not immersed.
>
> "A pamphlet entitled 'Hell in our High Schools' is having a great sale."

By these and similar methods Dayton attained celebrity without brains, and showed

how to put both religion and science to their proper use, as advertising matter for an American township.

Literalism and the Bible

The Immaculate Conception, or the doctrine of the birth of Christ by a Virgin, was always a difficult pill to swallow. Modern physiology has not made it easier, while the researches of the Higher Criticism have suggested a doubt as to whether it is necessary to swallow it at all. There are, it seems, varying accounts, some of them by doubtful hands; there are corrupt passages, glosses and later interpolations. Ought we not to enquire closely into these things before we credit so monstrous an affront to our common sense? Apparently not, if we are orthodox, American bishops. If we are orthodox, American bishops we shall be anxious above all things that our beliefs shall not be disturbed. We shall even raise the charge of heresy against those who presume to question our beliefs on

this comparatively irrelevant point of dogma, as witness the following:—

"RECTOR DEFIES BISHOP.

"Gown Instead of Vestments in New York's Exclusive Church.

"Dr. Leighton Parks, the venerable pastor of St. Bartholomew's, New York's most fashionable Episcopal church, discarded his vestments in the pulpit yesterday, appearing in an academic gown, says an Exchange message.

"Speaking as a Doctor of Philosophy, he denounced Bishop William Manning for indicting the Rev. L. Heaton, an obscure Texas pastor, for denying the virgin birth of Christ.

"He challenged Dr. Manning to call him a heretic, as he also denounced the belief, and appealed for 'liberalism in interpreting the Scriptures.'

"The Rev. Percy Stickney Grant, of the Church of the Ascension, has attacked the Bishop's pastoral letter, which demanded orthodoxy and adherence to 'Catholic tradition.'

"The organization of the 'Modern Churchmen's Union,' composed of 500 Protestant Episcopal ministers, is raising funds to defend Mr. Heaton."

After this we are not surprised to learn that in New York State schoolmasters are required to express disbelief in atheism before they teach, and immigrants before they land.[1] Nevertheless, the interest in religious beliefs even in America is not so great as it was; people care less than they did whether God exists or whether He does not, and, for this reason, persons anxious to suppress the evidence for unorthodox views in religious matters are not so zealous, nor are their efforts so well organized, as are the movements for suppressing unpopular opinions on politics and morals. Hence Communism and Free Love are now regarded with greater disfavour than Atheism. The attempt to make people good by prohibiting them from holding views on these questions other than those which would

[1] This only applies to steerage passengers, disbelief being thought natural enough in the rich.

be entertained by good Americans belongs, however, to the next section.

It is not part of my purpose to endeavour to show that the belief in an omnipotent, benevolent God is wrong; it may quite conceivably be right. What I desire to emphasize is the existence of other equally tenable hypotheses as to the nature of the universe, the organized refusal to permit the evidence for these other hypotheses to obtain a hearing, and the organized endeavour to boost the evidence for the omnipotent Deity.

This obstinate resolve to believe only in the most comfortable solution of metaphysical problems is called Idealism. Idealism may be described as the capacity for entertaining beliefs which we should like to be true, but for which there is no evidence. Americans are known to be great Idealists, and a part of their Idealism is doubtless derived from their eager acceptance of uplifting beliefs about the Deity. A more important part springs, however, from their resolute adoption of uplifting beliefs

about themselves, and it is to this that we must now turn.

II. OPTIMISM OR THE BELIEF THAT AMERICANS ARE GOOD AND THAT ALL IS THEREFORE WELL WITH AMERICA

Americans, as is well known, are prone to uplift; they are also very moral. This combination of uplift in thought and morality in conduct has considerably impressed the world.

A pamphlet was recently issued embodying an appeal on behalf of the League of Nations. The appeal stated that the League was endeavouring to "mobilize the moral forces of the world," and claimed support for it on this ground. In the interests of economy it was decided to print and distribute only in America, to which country, therefore, the pamphlet was specifically addressed. As a French delegate remarked, "They like that sort of thing there, and a little uplift won't do us much harm."

America, therefore, is recognized as a great

moral force. This view of America is sedulously cultivated by Americans, and those who refuse to subscribe to it are illtreated.

Morality as the Herd Impulse to Blame

Let us consider some of the forms in which the belief in American morality expresses itself. They will be rendered more readily intelligible, if we begin by pointing out that practical morality is largely a rationalization of the impulse to blame. People who lack the courage or who no longer possess the capacity to indulge in pleasure, obtain what satisfaction they can from preventing indulgence on the part of others. Hence old men give young men good advice, no longer being able to give them bad examples, while old women have invented Mrs. Grundy to deter their daughters from enjoyments which they themselves can no longer share.

Morality is a dog kept in the manger of the old; it is their substitute for the pleasures they have lost. When a whole generation com-

bines to cry sour grapes at pleasures beyond their reach, they produce a considerable impression. They impress in particular those who are still in a position to pluck the grapes. The world is governed by the old, who make the laws, control the Press, dominate public opinion and set the standards of current conventions; and it is only to be expected that young people should for the most part dance to the dirge their elders pipe them. When they refuse, they are blamed by society and disabled from pursuing their careers or holding any public appointment. The refusal is called "immorality," and the process of blaming "morality."

In a country like America, where uniformity of conduct is valued only one degree less than uniformity of thought, morality, that is to say, the capacity of public opinion for blaming what affronts it, is very powerful.

We have already called attention to the invention of God as a glorified good American, receiving worship in return for His guaranteed support of all American enterprises. We

did not, however, mention what is, perhaps, a necessary corollary of this conception, the tendency to worship Him in crowds. A national Deity created in the national image is most appropriately to be worshipped by the nation at large; He is a social rather than an individual possession. When an American can combine the worship of God and the worship of size, and provide at the same time a notable exhibition of efficiency in the organization of big-scale worshipping, he obtains pleasure from three sources simultaneously. Hence we hear of Gargantuan American prayer meetings. We see pictures of a Bible Class of 25,000 American men, all looking exactly alike and worshipping hard. They hear apparently very little of what is said, but they evince great pride in the colossal proportions of the collection, which it takes a dozen men to carry, and in the fact that their mammoth meeting is being carefully recorded on the "movies."

Now what is true of herd worship is true of herd morality. The American who likes to

worship in a crowd likes to think in a crowd; he feels more sure of his opinions if they are shared by other people, and the capacity to think for oneself on questions of morality is, as a result, rarer in America than in any other civilized country. Where the strength of public approval or disapproval is very great, men will be correspondingly anxious to secure the former and to avoid the latter. Hence virtuous conduct, which is the habit of acting in ways of which other people approve, is common in America.

The Difficulty of Virtue

With the belief in the importance of virtue is coupled a belief in its difficulty. People who labour, whether they like it or not, under a disability are constrained to make a merit of it. Americans, being required to restrain most of their natural impulses, must be able to feel proud of themselves for their restraint. Hence Americans cling tenaciously to the view that vice is easy and pleasant, virtue difficult and,

on the whole, unpleasant. This, however, is not the case. In a country in which morality, that is to say the power of administering blame socially, is as highly organized as it is in America, sin is not only difficult but uncomfortable. There is every inducement to lead a good life, and by so doing to win the approval of the herd, while all the force of public opinion deters from leading a wicked one. The time-honoured belief to the contrary is economic in origin, springing from the existence of a class of people who earn their living by teaching virtue. This class of people, which is mainly composed of paid officials belonging to the religions of various denominations, depends for its livelihood upon the prevalence of the belief that virtue is so abnormally difficult to achieve, that it is only by unremitting exertion that mankind can be constrained to even the most moderate degree of it. If men were to regard themselves as naturally virtuous, and vicious only under stress of abnormal circumstances, the paid teachers of virtue

would be superfluous. Hence arises the doctrine of man's original sin, which is sedulously cultivated by all those whose professions and salaries would disappear if men were once allowed to regard themselves as good by nature.

Morality, therefore, comes to be thought of as a priceless possession, hardly gained, and only preserved at the cost of continual exertion on the part of those who are paid to preserve it.

In considering the achievements of Americans in the sphere of goodness, it will be useful to bear in mind the prevalence of these two beliefs, first, that America is an extremely moral nation, and secondly, that the maintenance of this morality is a very difficult and, therefore, highly creditable performance, a performance which, in view of man's natural sinfulness, can only be kept up by the continued and disinterested exertions of priests and Vigilance Committees. In the light of these considerations the following illustrations may be more readily intelligible.

Purity Crusades

"New York," we read, "is in the throes of a purity crusade, the cause of which is Shubert's new revue, 'Artists and Models,' in which the chorus wear nothing above the waist line. The dramatic critics and the majority of the spectators appeared to regard the performance as perfectly moral, but the White Ribbon League insist that such exhibitions are corrupting American virtue, and threaten drastic measures."

Drastic measures are, however, not always successful elsewhere. Philadelphia, for instance, defies them with impunity, if we are to believe the following:—

"PHILADELPHIA 'CLEAN UP.'
"Raid on Liquor Stills and Bootleggers.
"General as Chief of Police.

"New York.

"Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love, more familiarly known to the sporting frater-

nity as 'Slumber Land,' or the 'Unconscious City,' is in the throes of an anti-vice crusade.

"Philadelphia, a city of 2,000,000 population, not a few of whom are in the bootlegging business, has always prided itself on its aristocratic families, its Quaker beliefs, and the fact that it was the cradle of American independence.

"But the city's pride has been woefully shaken. It stands amusingly on trial before the eyes of the nation. And all because the new Mayor decided to 'clean up' the city when he took over the reins of government. To this end he appointed as Chief of Police Brigadier-General Smedley Butler. . . .

"The first official act of the General as Chief of Police was to order the city to be 'cleaned up' within 48 hours. He informed police officials that any failure to comply would result in official heads being lopped off.

"Although he has been in office only a few days, eight police captains and lieutenants have lost their jobs, and more are likely to be

seeking other fields, if the courts uphold the General's action.

"Butler started out the first night with squads of policemen armed with short axes and proceeded to engage in a series of raids. A few illicit liquor stills and several wagon-loads of bootleggers were the net results of the raid.

"The General ordered that all women of the 'Primrose Path' description be sent out of town (Philadelphia was to be made virtuous even at the expense of other communities) and gunmen, burglars and others of the light-fingered gentry be rounded up wherever found.

"Then the General announced that Philadelphia was well on the road to being as pure as the driven snow. But what are the facts? Liquor, say the reporters, may still be bought within a stone's throw of the General's own headquarters.

"The bootleggers arrested are out on bail, and the court calendars of Philadelphia are filled with so many thousands of cases that the new ones cannot possibly be reached for a

couple of years, and by that time they will have been forgotten.

"And no sooner had the General's self-satisfied opinion about the clean-up been published, than Philadelphia was struck by a series of hold-ups and safe-blowings such as it had not had in months.

"The courts in Philadelphia have openly denounced the General's high-handed methods, and the politicians, seeing their graft endangered, are on the war-path."

* * * *

"Mrs. H. H. is the woman member of the New York State Censorship Commission. She says the standard of film production is improving by reason of the women's demand for clean films which producers are anxious to meet!"

It is the men, however, who appear to have taken up the rôle of guardians of the public morals in the Anti-Kissing League, which we understand has recently been formed among the members of a number of Western Universities. This league of twentieth-century Gala-

hads has sworn a vow against kissing. Each member is pledged not only never to kiss himself, but also severely to take in hand the osculations of his sisters; not only must he be a Puritan, but a propagandist Puritan. It must almost be worth while being a sister to enjoy the experience of being warned against kissing by an undergraduate brother. Everyone has noticed the fierce anti-sexual phase through which boys pass between the ages of twelve and fifteen. It is the stage immediately preceding the spotty one, and Freud has told us all about it. Sex has no attraction, women are soft and incompetent idiots, and it is a source of continual wonder that elder brothers should desire to waste their time with them. Confirmation, which occurs about this time, is also not without its effect.

We may take the Anti-Kissing League, therefore, as corroboratory evidence for that failure of Americans to grow up, which we have already noticed.

Springing from the conception of the difficulty of goodness is the belief that morality

wants advertising like a new form of patent goods, and is more potent when ventilated. A boy, who was recently charged in an American court with some misdemeanour of the pilfering variety, was commanded as his punishment to go about for six months with a poster printed with an appropriate text pinned to his hat.

The Goodness of the Constitution

And then, of course, there is the American Constitution, the Government of the United States. The Americans are happy in being the only people in the world so contented with their Government that they do not believe it to be capable of improvement. As Plato said of God, since He is entirely and completely good, we cannot conceive of Him as changing, since any change must involve an alteration in what is entirely and completely good, that is to say an alteration for the worse. And this, too, is the case with the American Constitution, and in particular with the Government of the

State of New York. Mr. Bertrand Russell quotes a recent law passed by the State of New York, providing that certificates permitting persons to teach in State schools shall be issued only to those who have "shown satisfactorily" that they are "loyal and obedient to the Government of this State and of the United States," and shall be refused to those who have advocated, no matter where or when, "a form of Government other than that of this State or of the United States."

The Committee which framed this law, as quoted by the *New Republic,* laid it down that the teacher who "does not approve of the present social system . . . must surrender his office," and that "no person who is not eager to combat the theories of social change, should be entrusted with the task of fitting the young and old for the responsibilities of citizenship."

Mr. Russell goes on to remark: "Thus, according to the law of the State of New York, Christ and George Washington were too degraded morally to be fit for the education of the young. If Christ were to go to New York

and say 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' the President of the New York School Board would reply: 'Sir, I see no evidence that you are eager to combat theories of social change. Indeed, I have heard it said that you advocate what you call the *kingdom* of heaven, whereas this country, thank God, is a republic. It is clear that the Government of your kingdom of heaven would differ materially from that of New York State; therefore no children will be allowed access to you.' If he failed to make this reply, he would not be doing his duty as a functionary entrusted with the administration of the law."

From the above, it seems to be clear that the political optimism of Americans requires them to hold the doctrine of immediate perfectibility, at any rate so far as the Government of the United States is concerned. This belief is, of course, contrary to the belief that this world is a vale of tears, compounded of suffering and imperfection, which we inhabit temporarily for disciplinary purposes, in order to fit ourselves for the perfection of the hereafter.

But Idealism can afford to disregard inconsistencies. The heart, indeed, has reasons of its own—and we may be sure they are very good ones—of which the reason knows nothing.

Good Americans in War-time

It is in war-time that the American belief in the goodness of America finds its richest expression. America entered the war in an ecstasy of moral fervour, which not only blinded the nation to all that it had said and done in the immediate past when it was resolved to keep out of the war, but made it oblivious to every consideration but the morality of its motives.

Christianity? The Sermon on the Mount? Christ's teaching on non-resistance? They were all very well in their way, of course, and highly thought of. They were like that very neutrality of Belgium which men set out to defend, guaranteed by all nations, and inviolate in time of peace, but not to be allowed to stand in the light of a people on the road to great

things. Besides, had not God just declared himself in the strongest and most unequivocal way a 'good' American, fighting on the side of right? "O Almighty God," says a prayer specially drawn up on the entrance of America into the war, "we humbly thank Thee that Thou hast put it into the heart of the President of the United States to enter this war in the defence of liberty and justice."

An American in war-time spends half his time in deceiving himself and the other half in justifying the deceit. How does he justify it? By simply ignoring all the facts which would be likely to undeceive him. This, after all, is only a special though extreme form of the process upon which the general belief in American morality is based, of overlooking whatever contradicts the belief. But there is no need to produce further evidence in favour of the American belief in American morality. The optimism and idealism of this great nation are plain for all to see.

Of what nature are the facts which contradict these beliefs?

III. FACTS CONTRARY TO THESE BELIEFS

Liberty During the War

It is in war-time, as we have seen, that the belief in the virtue of America is strongest. America prides herself on being a land of freedom; the war was a war for freedom, fought to liberate men's lives from the menace of tyranny. In order to finance the war for liberty, voluntary loans were floated to which Americans were asked to subscribe. They were known as "Liberty Loans." The following letter addressed to the English *Nation* indicates the extent to which they were in fact voluntary.

"AN INCIDENT IN THE WAR FOR FREEDOM

"Sir,—Miss M. Louise Hunt was, until recently, an assistant librarian at the Central Library in Portland, Oregon. An anonymous letter, supported by an article in a newspaper, charged her with the offence of failing to subscribe to the Third Liberty Loan. This charge,

according to *The Oregonian,* 'brought her to the notice of the Government officials and to the workers for the Third Liberty Loan.' The Loan Committee sent a deputation 'to ascertain why she did not subscribe to Liberty Bonds.' Upon this grave charge Miss Hunt was summoned before a special meeting of the Liberty Board, which, after 'thorough examination,' declared her guilty. 'Her conduct,' they pronounced, however, 'has never in any way obstructed, or tended to obstruct the activities of our Government. Her duties in carrying out the War Savings Stamp Campaign in the Liberty Loan have been conscientiously and efficiently performed.' They refused to dismiss her.

"Then began a hue and cry which occupied columns of *The Oregonian* every day. United States Attorney Hancy was consulted, and gave it as his considered judgment that there was no law to compel any citizen to purchase a Liberty Bond. However, he held there is a moral obligation to uphold the Government that is even greater. 'In my opinion,' he said,

'such a one should not be permitted to hold a public position whether she were within her legal rights or not.'

"*The Oregonian,* in a leading article, demanded a reconsideration of the decision of the Library Board.

> " 'There never would have been any trouble about Miss Hunt if she had merely had an opinion; but her difficulties arose when she expressed them and acted in consonance with them.'

"Although it was not charged against her that, prior to the action of the Loan Committee, she had made any public profession of pacifism, the publication of the views extorted from her by the Loan delegates dragged her secret crime into the open.

> " 'The common duty of all Americans,' *The Oregonian* concludes, 'is to support the war. No citizen may decline. *No citizen may say that his country is wrong when it is right.*[1] If our public libraries are to har-

[1] My italics.

bor either disloyalty or even non-loyalty, they had better be closed, at least for the period of the war. Then, if Germany has its way, perhaps Miss Hunt may be able to persuade the Kaiser to unlock the doors and install German kultur therein.'

"The City Federation of Women's Clubs adopted by unanimous vote a resolution protesting against the action of the trustees and declaring against the employment of any person who is disloyal to their country's policies. The congregation of the Mount Tabor Methodist Episcopal Church passed the following solemn resolution:—

" 'To the Members of the Board of Directors of the Portland Library Association.

Whereas, by refusal to buy Liberty Bonds and in other ways to support our Government in its present crisis, Miss Hunt, Assistant Librarian of our City Library, has shown an unpatriotic spirit and has rendered herself obnoxious to the loyal citizenship of our City; and, whereas such action is

> prejudicial to all patriotic efforts in our midst; therefore, be it resolved that we, the membership and congregation of the Mount Tabor Methodist Episcopal Church, respectfully request that the action taken by you in condoning Miss Hunt's attitude be rescinded and her resignation be requested. Signed by Pastor, President, Secretary of Official Board of Representatives of Congregation and Membership, in a unanimous vote taken Sunday morning, 1918.'

"The Oregon State Guard, the United Spanish War Veterans, the Association of Fathers of Soldiers and Sailors, and other important local bodies reinforced this demand. The Mayor thus expressed his sense of the gravity of the subject:

> " 'Miss Hunt's attitude is an insult to the motherhood of our nation and to the boys who are knee-deep in the muddy trenches of France, *fighting for liberty.*[1] Nothing short of her dismissal from an institution where

[1] My italics.

our boys and girls are compelled to go and must of necessity come in contact with a mind that is wholly un-American and unsympathetic to our common and vital cause will suffice in this case.'

"Miss Hunt tendered her resignation. It was accepted, though Mr. Woodward, the protagonist of loyalty, demanded that it should be refused and that formal dismissal should be substituted, a course which received support from several other members.

"The leading luncheon club, The Rotary, passed a resolution 'congratulating the Liberty Loan Committee and William F. Woodward for their loyalty and labors in the nation's service,' and declaring that 'there is no place in America for the Internationalist, the concealed Bolshevik, the I. W. W., nor the pro-German.'

"The Chairman of the Library Committee in his formal statement thus describes the initial action of the *Liberty* [1] Loan Committee: 'That

[1] My italics.

afternoon a committee from the Loan headquarters, apparently armed with full information on the matter, called to induce her to buy Bonds. Meeting a refusal, they closed the interview with a question so grossly insulting that if any stranger had asked it of the wife or sister of any one of them he would have promptly kicked the questioner out of the house.'

"But Portland's fight for liberty does not stand alone. *The Oregonian* punctuates this story by an inset paragraph headed

" 'IT'S DIFFERENT HERE' (Corvalles, Or., April 13th)

" 'The workmen at the Kinsman Mill rebelled to-day when one of their number refused to buy a Liberty Bond. The soliciting committee called at the mill, and twenty-nine out of the thirty men immediately signed up. Joe Sanders refused to subscribe. The other twenty-nine men then walked in to the boss and demanded that Sanders be fired. He was promptly fired.'

"*The Daily Telegraph* prints the following statement contained in a message to the Press conveyed by the American Chargé d'Affaires in London: 'The part played by the Press of these countries in conciliating and perfecting the efforts of the liberty-loving peoples to assure the perpetuity of their hard-won rights cannot be over-estimated.'—(Signed) 'From a Student in America.' "

Freedom of thought, however, is perhaps too much to expect among peoples fighting for liberty. War is exceptional; but in peace the normal life of a freedom-loving democracy re-asserts itself.

Freedom of Thought and Speech

We have already referred to the fact that immigrants entering America are required to express disbelief in Atheism. They must, however, also verbally renounce Communism and Free Love. In order to land in America, therefore, it is necessary either to be a hypocrite or to hold on controversial questions the

views which commend themselves to the American Government. This advance on the position adopted by *The Oregonian* in time of war is significant. "There never would have been any trouble about Miss Hunt if she had merely had an opinion; but her difficulties arose when she expressed them and acted in consonance with them," said *The Oregonian.* But now, apparently, it is not enough to refrain from expressing views which are unacceptable; the intending citizen must publicly affirm his disbelief in them.

Savage sentences of imprisonment have been passed since the war on so-called "Reds," who hold, or are supposed to hold, unpopular opinions. Eugene Debs languished in prison year after year for expressing agreement with the teaching of Christ on the subject of non-resistance, and professing himself a Socialist. He was only released when his health was completely broken.

Vigorous efforts are made in America to prevent any speaker from being heard who is

thought likely to disturb his hearers' belief in the general excellence of Americans. These efforts are usually, but not always, successful, as the following extract will bear witness:

"CRITIC OF U. S.

"Lectures at University in Spite of Protests.

"New York, Wednesday.

"Dr. Butler, President of Columbia University, states that the lectures arranged to be given at the University by Giovanni Papini, author of 'The Life of Christ,' will take place, despite the bitter protests which have been lodged on the ground of criticisms of America in Papini's writings.—*Central News.*

"(In one of his books Signor Papini referred to America as 'the home of millionaires, of the nauseating Longfellow, the intolerable Washington, and the degenerate Whitman.')"

The battle for freedom of thought and of speech which our ancestors waged in Great Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, must, it seems, be fought all over again in America. In England the battle was long and slow; men were tortured, burnt and hanged, and, within the memory of those now living, books were proscribed and speakers imprisoned on the altars of public orthodoxy; but the victory went ultimately to freedom. In England men's thoughts are on the whole free, and, except in war-time, they may, with certain exceptions, utter freely what they think. But the truth of Mill's famous dictum, "If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind," slowly, painfully and with considerable qualifications admitted in England, has not begun to be admitted in America. Yet the belief in American political perfection remains

such that "no person who is not anxious to combat the theories of social change should be entrusted with the task of fitting the young, etc." Freedom of thought and of speech are apparently not admitted as social goods, since the advocacy of that theory of social change which would enable anybody to advocate anything is prohibited. But then, were it not prohibited, the advocacy would be unnecessary, since freedom to advocate social change would mean that freedom of speech had been won.

In spite of this alleged perfection, the methods favoured by American politicians would also seem to be capable of improvement. There is little appeal to reason, and elections are characterized by disorder, violence and fanaticism; they also afford an opportunity for persecuting unpopular persons and causes. An account of an American election suggests nothing so much as a schoolboy scrap. The following extract relates incidents in an election for the Mayoralty of Detroit in October, 1925.

"Detroit, the fourth city of the United States, is at the moment a melting-pot of American emotions, with religion, race and Mr. Henry Ford all leading features.

"The Ku Klux Klan is trying a new method of attacking its three victims—negroes, Catholics and Jews.

"For weeks Klan organizers, combining American efficiency methods with fanaticism, have been fighting to elect a Klansman as Mayor, in opposition to a Catholic who is standing for re-election.

" 'Nightshirt' methods are discarded, but the usual denials of Klan activity are made when convenient.

"The fury and passion are such that a Protestant minister's wife advocated at a church meeting that women who failed to vote Protestant and pro-Klan should be tarred and feathered.

" 'Camelias,' as the women's branch of the Ku Klux Klan is called, is working to secure women's votes.

"The negroes whom the Klan in other

parts of America have persecuted, and murdered, are being courted; but the day after the election will begin the trial of a negro doctor for murder, because he fired on a mob of thousands who were attacking his home.

"During the last fortnight £10,000 have been spent in the more or less open bribery of negroes.

"Similarly the Ku Klux Klan is alternately fawning on and threatening the Jews, with little prospect of success, however."

Freedom for Other Races

The mention of negroes brings us to another aspect of American public life. America is a great democracy; hence it despises snobbishness. It offers an open door to the talents; it affords an equal opportunity to all comers; there is nothing to prevent a man of ability from rising to the top of the tree; merit tells. These are cherished beliefs; none more so; they

are jewels in the crown of American perfectionism.

Four years after the war a Jew, probably, but not certainly, of German extraction, endeavored to make his way in the American academic world. His experiences are given in an autobiography from a review of which the following is an extract.

> "Yet in democratic America, to which he had given his soul, he found every avenue to academic promotion barred because of his origin. Again and again appointments were refused to him because he was a Jew. Yet he still believed in the American ideal, 'the notion of liberty on which the Republic was founded,' the spirit that animated Emerson and Whitman. He was, in his own words, a 'pathetic pilgrim to a forgotten shrine.'"

Questions of social justice, or rather of social injustice, which are involved in the cold-shouldering of the Jew (we cannot believe that this cold-shouldering extends to the business

world) are raised in a far more acute form by the colour problem. This is a vexed and difficult question upon which an outsider has less right, perhaps, than usual to offer an opinion. His reason, which operates in a field untouched by prejudice or emotion, is bound to mislead when it seeks to pass judgment on the ways and motives of those whose world is one in which white and black are brought daily into contact.

Yet when making all allowances for the bias introduced by one's own impartiality, it is difficult to believe that these things would not be better managed in heaven. (We mention heaven because of that American belief, referred to above, that "theories of social change," which we presume would be involved in the establishment of heaven, "must be combated.") Heaven, we feel, would suit the blacks better, or at least some of them. We say this because there has always been a prejudice in favour of the view that heaven is more comfortable than hell. Now hell, or a very passable imitation of it, is what some

blacks are getting at present. Thus take the following from the *Daily News,* May, 1922:

"NEGRO BOY BURNED

"Terrible Lynching Atrocity in America

"Davisboro' (Georgia), Friday.

"A 15-year-old negro, named Charles Atkins, who had been arrested in connection with the murder of a rural mail carrier, named Mrs. Kitchens, was to-day tortured over a slow fire for 15 minutes, and then, whilst shrieking with pain, was questioned concerning his accomplices, as a result of which he implicated another youth. The ringleader of the mob, which consisted of some 2,000 people, then proceeded to chain Atkins to a pine tree and relit the fire. While the tortured boy was burning, some 200 shots were fired at his body. The mob are now searching for the other lad."—Reuter.

When we read the stories of lynchings in the Southern States, of thousands of cheap excursionists travelling by train to see a nigger's tongue torn out before he is burnt alive, Americans will, I feel sure, forgive us, if we fail entirely to subscribe to the view that theories of social change necessarily, and in all cases, require combating in America.

They will forgive us, too, if we cannot avoid feeling that just occasionally the belief in the virtue of Americans thrives by turning a blind eye to a certain kind of facts. It is, of course, true that our repugnance to the torture of negroes may lay us open in our turn to the charge of Puritanism. It may be the case that we object to the burning of negroes not so much because of the pain it gives to the negroes, as because of the pleasure it gives to the spectators, but this indication of Puritanism on our part is not altogether regrettable. In writing of a moral country like America a tincture of morality in the writer ensures sympathy and assists comprehension.

It must not, however, be forgotten that

America is the land not only of liberty but of equality. It is the greatest democracy in the world, and in a democracy all men should be treated as being theoretically equal. And in theory they are. Thus New York, which is the best city in America for negroes, has a law insisting on equal treatment for whites and blacks. In practice, however, the law does not seem to have quite the effect which its framers seem to have intended.

"Coloured people," we are told, "who enter the vast majority of restaurants are ignored or made too uncomfortable to stay. They are refused rooms at all the big hotels.

"Members of any 'respectable' club taking in a negro visitor would be called before the committee or asked to resign, with perhaps the exception of two clubs.

"Negroes have separate churches, theatres, cinemas, night clubs, though there is no discrimination in trains or trams.

"The entrance of one negro family into a block of flats would lead to the exodus of every white family.

"The adoption of a fashion in dress by negroes means that it would be dropped by everybody else.

"Public men refuse to talk on this subject, the facts being too wildly at variance with the democratic theory."

The Americans have no use for gentlemen and ladies; they are proud to be merely citizens. It is, therefore, no doubt a source of gratification to the American to reflect that in his dealings with negroes he is only every other inch a gentleman.

Sex Morality

As regards that narrower aspect of morality which embraces virtuous conduct in sexual matters, Americans are highly moral, in the sense that they act habitually in ways of which other Americans approve. Nowhere is the economic embargo against sexual irregularity more rigidly applied. Although there is nothing in law to prevent a good American having sexual relations outside the marriage tie, he is

more or less certain to starve if he gets found out, through the refusal of other Americans, who have not been found out, to employ him. This, of course, is not true of certain privileged professions like that of acting for the "movies."

Actors for the "movies" are somehow different; they live in an unreal world, and enjoy a freedom proper to that world, but grossly improper in the world of normal, good Americans. From the eagerness of the good American to take it out of the film star who happens to be breathed upon, however remotely, by the breath of scandal, it is to be presumed that he envies this freedom in his heart.

A dinner was recently given at Los Angeles to a certain Miss Normand and other film stars by a rich American business man. It is reported that in the middle of the banquet Miss Normand's chauffeur burst into the room and shot the host. Good Americans immediately suspected the worst and determined to assert themselves. This they did drastically, if irrelevantly, as follows:

"Several districts in America have now banned all films in which Miss Mabel Normand appears. Among them are the States of New Hampshire and Ohio, and the city of Memphis, Tennessee. Kansas is expected to adopt a similar course.

"A Mabel Normand picture was to have been shown in the largest kinema in Oklahoma this afternoon. It was cancelled."

Incidents of this kind show clearly how intense is the disgust felt by Americans for sexual irregularity. They will not touch the accursed thing at any price. This terrifying probity is based upon and largely identified with the great respect in which the marriage tie is held in America. Morality is wrapped up in marriage; irregular sexual relations are anathema. They must be punished with the full weight of public disapproval, and any tendency to condone them is severely reprimanded. Christ himself showed an unfortunate laxity in this matter which good Americans cannot but feel to have been most regrettable.

This regret takes the usual form of covering up what occasions it. Thus we notice in the press that "Dr. E. J. Goodspeed, who has been professor of Greek at Chicago University since 1915, is engaged upon an American translation of the New Testament, a task which has been highly commended by the Theological Faculties Union, says the Central News Chicago correspondent.

"Dr. Goodspeed is deleting the story, as told in the eighth chapter of St. John, of Christ pardoning the woman taken in adultery."

Dr. Goodspeed gives as the reason for this deletion the doubt which he feels as to whether this story has been rightly attributed to St. John's authorship. As to this we shall have our own opinion. We do not hear that Dr. Goodspeed has omitted any other passage of doubtful authenticity from the Bible, which he has so thoughtfully translated into American.

A little Latin and less Greek may not be a matter for reproach. When, however, it is combined with an enthusiasm for morality of

an American intensity, the lack of it may become a public nuisance. A year or so ago, a certain Mr. Herbert Loewe, of Exeter College, Oxford, sent a copy of Schleussner's *Septuagint Lexicon* to a friend in New York. In a fortnight's time it was returned to him without explanation by the American Customs. Customs officials are, it appears, on the lookout for indecent books, and seeing the unknown letters of an unknown tongue, took the view that the decent obscurity of an antique language must have been invoked to veil some hideous obscenity. So the *Septuagint,* of all works, is excluded from America lest it pollute the purity of the native mind. A sad commentary this, on the number of lecturers we have sent to America to supply the American craving to "get culture quickly."

In the light of these incidents, from which it will be seen that even the Bible itself is not immune from the American rage for decency, we can no longer doubt that the Americans set great store by moral purity, a conclusion

which is reinforced by a consideration of the state of marriage in America. Americans, as is well known, are very successful in maintaining a high standard of conjugal fidelity, and in suppressing the outbreak of irregular unions. How is this success achieved? By the simple expedient of easy divorce. Nowhere in the world can a divorce be so readily obtained as in certain of the American States. No ground is too trivial to justify the filing of a petition. Take, for instance, the following:

"WIRELESS DIVORCE

"'Radiomania' as a Ground for Petition

"Paris, Monday.

"According to the *New York Herald* (European Edition) Mrs. Cora M. White, of Minneapolis, is applying for a divorce on the ground that her husband suffers from 'radiomania.'

"From the particulars given by the petitioner, it would appear that Mr. White took

to wireless two years ago, spent most of his time with his own set, and kept his wife and daughter awake at all hours of the night.

"The high tension of domestic relations was amplified by the low frequency with which he provided funds for clothes, inasmuch as he spent his money on new apparatus and parts, thereby almost worrying his wife to death."

The ease with which divorce is apparently to be obtained in America does much to facilitate the belief in American morality. Immorality, as we have suggested, consists in irregular sexual relations; but where these can be regularized almost at will, there is no necessity for being immoral. Hence the belief in American morality flourishes undisturbed. This belief, like the others to which I have referred, is not based upon evidence but springs from desire. Americans who desire to be virtuous, in fact, are prepared, when the facts gainsay them, to satisfy their desire with beliefs. Hence for a goodness which is unreal, they substitute a real belief in a goodness

which is fictitious. Here once more we are at one of the sources of American idealism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON CIVILIZATION

As it is with morality, so it is with civilization. Americans wish to think themselves civilized; they also wish to think themselves efficient, learned, cultivated and artistic. Under the sway of these desires they are prepared to mistake hurry for efficiency, mechanical ingenuity for science, connoisseurship for culture, ostentation for art, and, so long as the belief in goodness is accepted as a sufficient substitute for goodness, we may add, hypocrisy for virtue.

Although the instances that I have quoted of the perversions of truth, beauty and goodness have been taken almost entirely from America, I do not wish to suggest either that Americans are without exception chargeable with these perversions, or that they are peculiar to America. There are Americans who are gentle, courteous and tolerant, men of

knowledge and understanding, capable of fine shades of feeling and a sensitive consideration for the feelings of others, and possessing a culture all their own. We all know such Americans and value them the more for the contrast they present to their more prominent fellow countrymen.

But the man of whose habits and thoughts I have spoken in this book, the Nordic hundred per-center, is very different from these Americans we love and respect. His is the predominant type to-day, and sets increasingly the standard of American life. And just as he is in the van of American civilization, so is this civilization the advance-guard of similar forces throughout the western world. America, being the most modern of the nations, is a signpost pointing along the road which the other nations are following. In other words, America represents the next stage of advance among the nations of Western Europe. In so far, therefore, as "civilization" is more developed in America than it is elsewhere, we may in due course expect to see the main fea-

tures of American life and thought increasingly prevalent among ourselves.

It may be that truth, beauty and goodness are not the true aims of human endeavour, and that the standards by which I have sought to judge those things in modern civilization which degrade them are irrelevant. But in spite of the different forms in which these ideal ends manifest themselves, and the different accents in which their message comes to individual men and women, it cannot, I think, be doubted that they still shine like stars over the path of human progress as fixed, as unalterable and as bafflingly desirable as on the day when Plato first gave them a special place in that hierarchy of Forms, which constituted, for him, the real world.

Man comes into life to seek and to find his sufficient beauty, his peculiar truth, his individual goodness, to serve and to work for them. to face in their service obloquy and suffering, misunderstanding and neglect, counting death itself as nothing, so long as the dying eyes still turn to them. Against him stand arrayed

efficiency and mechanism, business and hustle, luxury and display, complacency and hypocrisy to thwart his efforts, to head him off from his quest and to beguile him from his path by taking to themselves the false semblance of that which he is seeking. And, as Plato said, it is by the persuasion and beguilement of what is easy and pleasant, rather than by the violence that resists in the open, that men are led to betray and forget that instinctive knowledge about truth, beauty and goodness which has been committed to them as their birthright.

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